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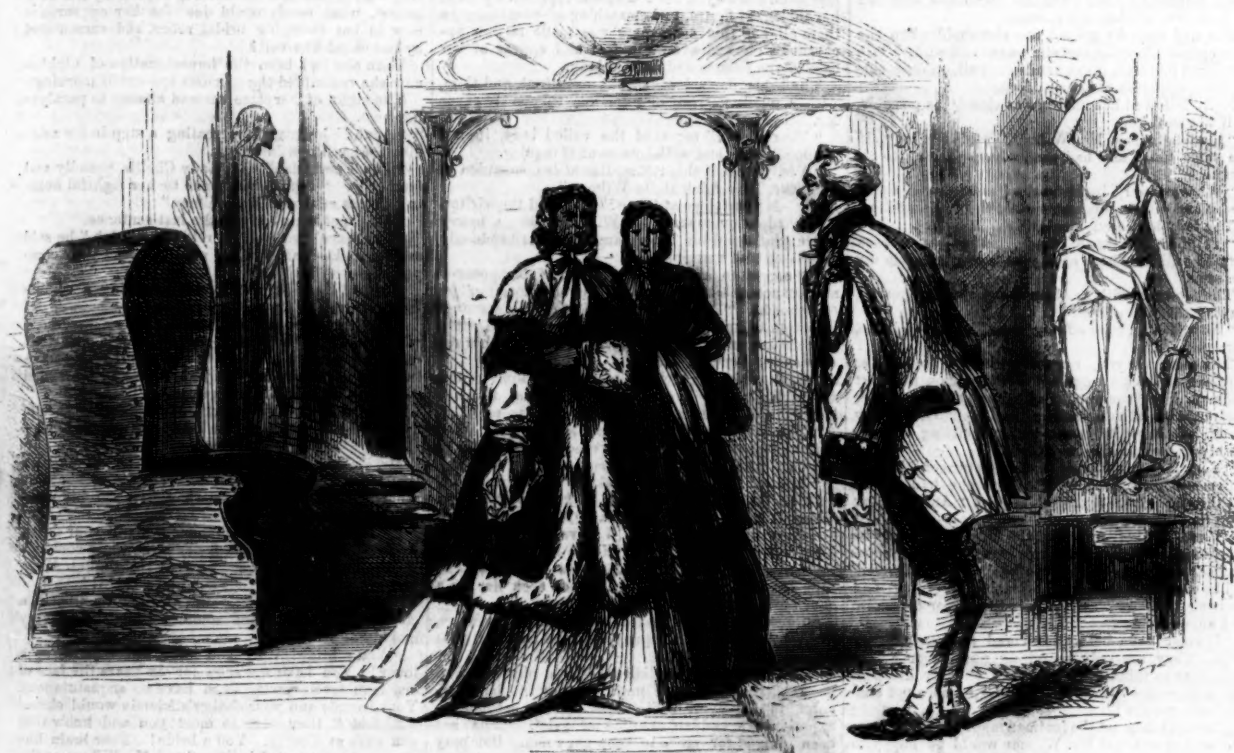
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[THE ARRIVAL AT MR. WILMER'S]

A LIFE AT STAKE.

BY LEON LEWIS.

CHAPTER XI.

Alone she was—alone! that worn-out word,
So idly spoken, and so coldly heard:
Yet all that poets sing, and grief hath known,
Of hope laid waste, knells in that world—alone!

The New Times.

We will now direct the attention of the reader to the unknown and mysterious bride of Sir Hugh Chellis.

The moment after waving her adieu to the bewildered baronet she sank back upon the cushions of the vehicle she had entered, drooped her head upon her breast, and assumed an attitude expressive of the deepest sadness.

"What must he think of me?" she murmured, so faintly that her maid could not catch the import of her words. "He must deem me unwomanly—an adventuress perhaps, who desires to conceal her infamy under an honourable name! If he had not been utterly reckless and oppressed with debts, he would have repulsed my offer with scorn. He chose between a marriage with me and a debtor's prison, or a suicide's grave. It is not pleasant to think of it!"

She seemed to shrink within herself, and drew closer about her figure the long dark cloak that completely concealed her bridal robes.

After a moment or two of apparently bitter self-communing she said aloud, with a faint smile:

"Well, Nelly, how did you like my bridegroom?"

"He is a splendid-looking gentleman, miss—that is, my lady," replied the maid, with enthusiasm. "I am sure you couldn't have chosen better if you had had a hundred lovers to choose from. And he's a baronet too! It does seem as though Providence had guided your ladyship, for you might have married a wicked man, or one old enough to be your grandfather!"

"It would have been all the same," said the lady, wearily. "I did not want a husband, Nelly. It was

necessary that I should marry within three days, and I should have married a bed-carrier, if such a person had been the only husband I could have obtained!"

"Yes, my lady, but surely you are pleased that your husband is a gentleman."

"Hush, Nelly; do not address me by that title. I feel as if I had no right to it. Besides, it only serves to remind me what a sacrifice of maidenly delicacy I have gained it. The name of Lady Chellis is abhorrent to me!"

The maid was about to make some reply when her quick ears caught the sound made by the pursuing cab, in which Sir Hugh was following his bride. With an exclamation of terror she looked out from the window and cried:

"Someone is following us, miss. It can't be him."

"No, it is Sir Hugh!" said the bride, quietly. "I thought he would follow me. It is but natural he should. Tell the driver to elude pursuit, and he shall have double pay!"

The maid obeyed the command, and the vehicle proceeded at an increased rate of speed.

"Mine has been a strange bridal!" murmured the lady, sorrowfully. "In my waking girlish dreams I sometimes thought of marriage, but I never, never pictured an occurrence like this! I never imagined that I should flee from the altar, pursued by a husband of whom I should know nothing but his name. I hope I shall never see him again. I could never bear to meet his gaze!"

"Why not look on the bright side, miss?" said the maid, affectionately. "It is true that you have done something extraordinary, but you have a good and sufficient reason for your actions. If Sir Hugh Chellis knew the truth he would respect and admire you!"

The lady made a gesture of impatience.

"At least, miss, think of your uncle, and how you have outwitted him!" exclaimed Nelly. "You are your own mistress now, and no one dare molest you. It is for you to dictate, and for others to obey!"

"Yes, thank heaven, the hour of my triumph has come at last!" exclaimed the bride, with a long in-

spiration, as if realizing for the first time that she was breathing the air of freedom. "At last—at last!"

She shook off the burden resting upon her, drew herself upright, and clasped her hands in thankful prayerfulness.

It was noticeable that the tones she employed in speaking were very different from those she had used in conversing with Sir Hugh—they were purer, deeper, and richer now.

"At last I am free!" she repeated, her voice tremulous with joy. "Free to do as I please—free to come and go—to rule over my household—to reward you, my faithful Nelly, my true-hearted foster-sister!" And she pressed the hand of her maid with grateful affection.

"I have had my reward in assisting to secure your happiness, miss," was the reply of Nelly as she wiped her eyes under her veil. "But where are we now?" she added as the vehicle proceeded more slowly.

"Can Sir Hugh be overtaking us?"

Again looking from the window, she discovered that they were in a crowded street, and that the pursuing cab was not in sight.

She hastened to inform her mistress of this.

"Let the cabman set us down here," said the lady, quickly. "Before Sir Hugh can have turned the corner we shall have disappeared!"

The driver was signalled, the vehicle stopped, the fare hastily settled, and the bride and her attendant entered an adjacent shop, from the window of which they soon beheld Sir Hugh, as he passed, in pursuit.

They waited a few minutes, ostensibly for the purpose of making some trivial purchases, and then entered the street again, summoned another cab, and resumed their journey.

The course taken by the cabman, in obedience to the maid's directions, was towards the West End, and the narrow business streets were soon exchanged for wider and more fashionable avenues.

As they neared their destination the lady became nervous and agitated, and Nelly endeavoured to re-inspire her with the courage that had sustained her throughout the trying scenes of the morning.



It was doubtful if the bride were conscious of the efforts of her attendant to soothe and encourage her. But as they entered Albemarle Street she regained her self-possession, loosened her hold of Nelly's hand, and was in a moment quiet, dignified, and thorough mistress of herself.

"Here we are!" she said as the cab stopped before a stately dwelling, and the driver hastened to open the door, after having rung at the mansion. "Have no fears, Nelly. I am mistress of the situation!"

She alighted and walked slowly up the marble steps, followed by her attendant, who had lingered an instant to dismiss the cabman.

She had scarcely gained the threshold when the door opened abruptly, and she was admitted, by a tall, powdered footman, into a handsome hall, on each side of which opened a series of doors.

Nelly followed her mistress as closely as possible, as if to guard her.

"I wish to see Mr. Wilmer," said the lady, in the same tones she had used when speaking to Sir Hugh.

"What name?" inquired the footman, with a puzzled glance at the incongruous attire of the visitor.

The lady hesitated, and then said, quietly: "Tell Mr. Wilmer that Lady Chellis desires to see him. I will wait here until you have given him my message."

The footman, with an obsequious bow, disappeared, leaving the lady alone with her maid.

"Now, Nelly, take off my cloak," said the bride, hurriedly.

The maid obeyed, removing the cumbersome outer garment, and bestowing it carefully upon a velvet ottoman. She then shook out the heavy folds of her mistress's bridal veil, letting it fall around her snowy dress, like a white cloud, and permitting it completely to conceal the lady's face.

"Your ladyship looks the very picture of a bride," whispered Nelly, admiringly, when she had spread out the ample train of the bridal robe. "And you look even more like a queen—"

"Hush, Nelly!" returned the lady. "We may be overheard. Do you not hear signs of confusion upstairs? I suppose my escape has been discovered!"

The maid assented, as the tramping of feet and shutting of doors was heard in the upper corridors, and answered:

"It must have been discovered an hour ago, my lady. They are only searching now, because they can't bear to think that you have entirely escaped. But here comes Wilson. I wonder he does not suspect who we are!"

The next moment the footman made his appearance, and announced that Mr. Wilmer would be happy to see Lady Chellis in the drawing-room.

The man looked astonished at the transformation wrought in her ladyship's appearance, but, without noticing him, the bride paused before a long, panelled mirror, gave a hasty glance at the radiant vision she presented, and then, with a stately step, followed his guidance to the drawing-room door.

He then ushered her into the saloon, giving ingress also to the devoted maid.

It was a magnificent room, or series of rooms, in which the bride found herself—a vast saloon, divided by curtains of crimson and gold velvet into three elegant drawing-rooms. These curtains were festooned with cards and tassels of bullion, so that a view of all the rooms was permitted to the occupant of either. The walls and ceiling were painted in fresco, and life-like figures seemed to bend down from above, flinging garlands to the newly made bride. A great chandelier, with a thousand pendant lustres, depended from the centre of the ceiling. The windows were curtained with lace and crimson satin, and the warm glow overspreading everything was enhanced by the gorgeous Eastern fabric covering the floor and muffling the footsteps of the intruders.

There were two occupants of the first drawing-room.

One of these was Mr. Wilmer, the gentleman for whom the lady had inquired. He arose and came forward at her entrance, his countenance expressive of astonishment at the visit of this white-robed figure.

His personal appearance was decidedly unprepossessing. He was thin and spare. He was tall, and appeared taller than he was, because of his thinness. His features were all sharp, and his eyes—of a pale, uncertain hue—were shifting and uneasy in their glances. His forehead was high but narrow, and was crowned by a thin and slight display of hay-coloured hair.

He seemed to be suffering under some heavy and sudden blow, and though he endeavoured to smile as he approached his guest it was easy to see that the smile was forced and unnatural.

"Lady Chellis, I believe?" said Mr. Wilmer, in a perturbed voice, and apparently scarcely conscious of what he said.

The mysterious bride bowed gravely.

"Allow me to introduce to your ladyship Mrs. Barrat, the friend and companion of my niece!" remarked the host as the visitor turned her head in the direction of the second occupant of the drawing-room.

Mrs. Barrat arose and acknowledged the introduction by a profound and even obsequious bow.

She was a woman still young, and endowed with a certain order of beauty—a style, however, that would never appeal to the admiration of a refined mind. Her bold, black eyes, her red cheeks, her full lips, and her inelegant figure, had something of coarseness in them all, and this coarseness was made farther apparent by her endeavours to feel and appear at her ease in the presence of a titled lady.

The bride glanced at her but an instant, and then, with a quick gesture of aversion, turned towards Mr. Wilmer.

"Your niece?" repeated the veiled lady, in her assumed voice, and with an accent of inquiry.

"Yes, your ladyship; Mrs. Barrat is companion to my niece, Miss Adah Holte Wilmer."

"Is—in your niece at home?" inquired the visitor.

A shadow overspread Mr. Wilmer's face, a heavy frown contracted his brows, and he seemed suddenly distressed and anxious.

"I regret to say that my niece has disappeared most unaccountably, and only this very morning," he exclaimed. "But I have sent most of my servants in search of her, and have also employed a detective to trace her and bring her home. I expect her return every moment."

"A detective in search of her?" inquired the veiled lady, a thrill of exultation pulsing through her tones as she remembered that she was married.

"Yes, and he cannot fail to discover her. Was your visit intended for my poor niece, Lady Chellis?"

The young bride bowed assent.

"Indeed!" said the host, looking at her uneasily, and endeavouring to piece with his keen eyes through the veil shrouding her features. "My niece does not see company, Lady Chellis. I have been obliged to deny her dearest and oldest friends all access to her presence for years. Her mother's relatives—and they are few and distant—have not seen her for a considerable time!"

The veiled lady uttered an exclamation of surprise, and ventured upon an inquiry as to the cause of Miss Wilmer's seclusion.

"Her health is so delicate—both physical and mental," replied Mr. Wilmer, putting his handkerchief to his eyes, while Mrs. Barrat seemed to experience a sudden emotion of grief. "She has been obliged for years to keep her room. But pray be seated, Lady Chellis. Pardon my apparent inhospitality, but, in truth, I can think of nothing and no one save my poor afflicted niece, who is wandering no one knows where. She is suffering under an aberration of mind, such as darkened the last days of her poor father, my elder brother. She inherited from him a predisposition to insanity, and for several years she has been subject to fits of violent fury, when even I, of whom she is at times extravagantly fond, have feared to approach her."

As she listened to this tale the veiled young bride pressed the hand of her maid, as if to give vent in silence to the indignation that could not be wholly repressed; and Nelly with difficulty restrained herself from peering out a torrent of reproaches upon the uncle and guardian of her mistress.

Impressed by the silence of his guests, Mr. Wilmer looked nervous and anxious.

"You are Lady Chellis, I think you said," he remarked, with an endeavour to speak carelessly. "Are you a member of the ancient Welsh family of the same name?"

"I am!" declared the bride, in her low, assumed tones. "My husband is Sir Hugh Chellis, of Hawk's Nest!"

Mr. Wilmer became pale, and started.

"The Chellis was formerly friends of the Wilmers—very devoted friends," he said, trying to conceal the fears her announcement had aroused. "I believe the friendship originated in a love-affair between my uncle and Miss Dorothy Chellis, who was a great beauty in her day. She must be old now, if living. My uncle died before the time appointed for the marriage, but Miss Chellis always remained single for his sake. She was very fond of my brother in his youth, and she wrote me a letter of condolence after learning that my poor niece had succumbed to the malady inherited from her father, the late Mr. Wilmer. Perhaps you are come to see Miss Wilmer on account of Miss Chellis?"

Mrs. Barrat had been watching the intruders with a keen, hawk-like gaze, and, as the veiled lady arose at this juncture, the ex-governess came forward, caught Mr. Wilmer's arm, and was about to whisper something in his ear, when she was startled by the manner of Lady Chellis.

The mysterious bride of Sir Hugh took a step forward, threw back her veil, and stood before them with flashing eyes and lips quivering with indignation.

She was exceedingly beautiful, with scarlet colour flickering in and out of her clear cheeks, with her glorious dark eyes radiant with light, a haughty scorn expressed in every feature, and her slender figure grown suddenly replete with grace and majesty.

If she had looked beautiful in the dull light of a single street lamp, with her face shaded by her dark bonnet, what words could describe her appearance now in her sweeping bridal robes, and surrounded by her cloud-like veil?

Then she had been the impersonation of night—now she resembled the glorious and sunlit morning. The sight of her face seemed almost to paralyze her host.

"Adah!" he gasped, retreating a step in his astonishment and bewilderment.

"Yes, I am Adah," said Lady Chellis, proudly and fearlessly. "I am Adah, come to her rightful home to reign as mistress, Mr. Wilmer."

He did not seem to hear the last sentence.

"You have done well in returning, Adah," he said as soon as he could find his voice. "And your companion—who is she?"

The maid withdrew her veil, revealing a comely face, full of honesty and goodness.

"As I suspected," exclaimed the ex-governess, with an angry look at Nelly. "It was you then who assisted your mistress to escape. I might have known better than to trust you, when you pretended to believe in Miss Wilmer's insanity."

Nelly replied only by an exasperating glance of defiance that startled as well as angered Mrs. Barrat.

Mr. Wilmer breathed more freely on discovering that his niece had returned to her home without any other protector or defender than her, and his voice was high and unpleasant as he demanded:

"What means all this rambling about your dress, Adah? Anyone to look at you now would conclude as once that you were not in your right mind. Why, you have tricked yourself out like a bride!"

"Because I am one!" declared Lady Chellis, in a clear, sweet tone, that sounded like the silvery melody of a bell.

"You a bride! Why you have never had even a lover! You have not seen for six years the face of any man save myself. You have no acquaintances. Your friends and your father's friends would shriek with fear if they were to meet you and know that you were at liberty. You a bride! Your brain has given away at last, I believe," and Mr. Wilmer spoke sincerely, so improbable seemed to him the fact of Adah's marriage. "Have you been wandering about the streets in that guise during the hours you have been missing? I wonder you were not—Well," he added, pleased with a sudden thought, "it may be as well, after all, that you have made this escapade—as well, I mean, for me. This going about in bridal attire will be quoted as one of your mad freaks. At first, when I discovered how you had crept, with the aid of that treacherous creature, and he pointed to Nelly, 'I was angry enough to have—I was very angry. I suppose you have had enough of freedom and of friends, haven't you?'"

"I have not been to any of my family friends," said Lady Chellis. "I knew very well that you had forestalled any communication I might make to them, and that they would only return me to you. Instead of that, I have been to get married."

Mr. Wilmer smiled incredulously.

"You seem to forget, Adah," he said, "that I am as well, and perhaps better, acquainted with the English marriage laws than yourself. You have been absent from home about three hours, more or less. During that period, to make your words true, you would have been obliged to find a gentleman willing to marry you; then to obtain a special licence, and finally to proceed to the church and obtain the clergyman's services. All these things could not possibly take place in three hours. You know nobody. Gentlemen do not propose marriage to strange ladies at first sight, and submit to be led to the altar within the hour. You are mad, my poor Adah."

"I am not mad, and you know it!" interrupted Lady Chellis, with a calm smile of conscious power. "And I am legally married by special licence. I may assist your belief of my statement if I tell you that I have not been out of my rooms to-day for the first time. Yesterday, when you were at a dinner-party, and Mrs. Barrat had gone to visit a friend, leaving me in charge of my faithful Nelly, I made my escape, and enjoyed my freedom three or four hours, while Nelly personated me at home, in case of your return."

Mr. Wilmer bestowed a menacing glance upon

Nelly, and Mrs. Barrat looked equally threatening, but the faithful maid did not appear intimidated by either. So long as her mistress's courage remained her own would not fail. Besides, she possessed unlimited faith in the marriage certificate which Lady Chellis carried next her heart.

"During my absence of last night I encountered a young gentleman who agreed to marry me this morning, and to meet me with a special licence in his pocket."

"Incredible!" ejaculated Mr. Wilmer. "Do you mean that a strange gentleman, whom you met for the first time, and in the street, immediately proposed marriage?"

"No," replied Lady Chellis, a faint shadow passing over the brilliancy of her beauty and then vanishing. "It was I who proposed marriage. I knew that I must be married within three days if I would frustrate your wicked schemes. When I went out I was determined to find a husband, no matter how poor and ignorant he might be. Nothing could be worse than my life here—nothing could be worse than to become a pensioner on your bounty. Perhaps I was unwomanly," here she spoke as if to herself, "but he met my advances in a frank, manly spirit, and promised that he would marry me this morning. This morning Nelly and I, dressed as we are now, except that I wore a dark cloak and bonnet, made our escape from this house. We went first to a milliner's for a white bonnet, then to a money-lender's, where I pledged my jewels—those left me by my god-mother—"

"Hear her!" cried Mr. Wilmer, pale with anger and alarm. "Can this extraordinary story be true?"

"It is perfectly true, as you are about to find to your cost, Mr. Wilmer!"

"His name?"

"Sir Hugh Chellis, of Hawk's Nest. Consequently you see that I am a member of the same family as Miss Dorothy Chellis, of whom you spoke a few minutes since!"

And the bride smiled.

"Proofs—proofs!" cried the baffled guardian, as he sank, livid and ghastly, into a chair.

"What proofs can you desire? The church register is doubtless open to your investigations. But I have other proofs at hand, which you may see. Here is the certificate of my marriage."

She withdrew the document from her bosom, unfolded it, scanned it herself, and then advanced and placed it before the eyes of her uncle.

He seized it eagerly, and looked at it with a keen and almost despairing gaze.

Mrs. Barrat silently approached him and looked over his shoulder.

There was no doubting the authenticity of the document. The plain statement, the different signatures of the clergyman and witnesses, attested to its genuineness, and as he regarded it a fearful expression darkened the visage of the guardian.

"Outwitted!" he muttered, letting the paper fall from his nerveless hands—"outwitted by a mere girl, one who knows nothing of the world, who has been shut up for six years in close confinement! It is too hard to bear!"

Lady Chellis stooped and picked up the paper that was to her the sign and token of a blessed deliverance from a life of torture, and restored it to her bosom.

"Outwitted!" repeated her uncle, adding, as his gaze fell upon the ex-governess. "And it is to you, Mrs. Barrat, that I owe the fact! If you had stayed with your charge last evening as usual she would not have ruined me!"

The ex-governess retreated from her employer in affright at his dark looks and despairing manner, and Lady Chellis, after a moment's farther silence, said:

"You need not spend time, Mr. Wilmer, in exchanging recriminations with the woman who has only served you too well. I have much to say to you. Let us come to the point at once."

Mr. Wilmer lifted his head, as if wondering what Lady Chellis could have to say to him now that she was freed from his authority, and the ex-governess, creeping nearer, in order to hear more clearly the proposed communication.

CHAPTER XII.

Was man ever sit and wall their loss,
But closely seek how to redress their harm.
Shakespeare.

ILDE DARE was in her own private room, the front chamber over Sir Allyn's study. All around her were evidences of her father's love and care. The pretty blue silk hangings on the walls, the sunny pictures, the costly ornaments and *bijouterie* littering the table and mantel-piece, had all been chosen by him. He had loved to surround her with everything choice and beautiful, and nothing had been deemed too rare or costly for his darling. As

a result, her room was a perfect fairy bower, in which was garnered a host of pretty treasures, and all the delicate appliances of luxury.

The crowning beauty of the apartment was its large, deep oriel window, looking out upon the lawn and towards the distant road. Filmy lace curtains shut off this little retreat, which was furnished with a silken lounge, and a movable bookstand, well laden with handsomely bound volumes. Here among the ample cushions in this sunny little nook Ilde had dreamed away, as maidens will, many a leisure hour. Her purest thoughts, her sweetest dreams, her dearest hopes, had all been conceived here.

She occupied it now, but it was not to indulge in happy reveries. Her head was hidden among the cushions, her face was concealed by her rippling hair, upon which the vagrant beams of sunshine played, and her attitude expressed misery, almost despair.

The words of Therwell, assuring her that her father's fate depended upon her self-sacrifice, were ringing in her ears, and she could not shut them out.

"His life is at stake!" she whispered, with a shudder, as if fearful that the very air would hear her and repeat the terrible secret. "My father's life is forfeit to the law, and I can save him! What can he have done that this sacrifice should be demanded of me? But I will not doubt him—poor papa! I will save him!"

She spoke the words tremulously, and then moaned pitifully.

She scarcely knew herself how much it cost her to say them. But in her girlish visions she had dreamed of a lover, gallant and young, like Lord Tressilian, and her heart clung to the idol it had created. It had seemed to her that day, when the young viscount had looked tenderly and hopefully into her eyes, and reminded her of her childish promise to become his wife, that he was the lover of whom she had dreamed, and her heart thrilled with a vague, undefinable sense of bliss.

But now it was weighed down with misery.

"It cannot be," she exclaimed, with sudden and passionate resistance against the fate marked out for her, "it cannot be that I must become the wife of this man, when my whole being rises up against him! He has made my father's hair turn gray—he has bowed his form with grief and dread—he has wracked his life, his usefulness, his happiness! He is my deadly enemy, and seeks to wed me in order to humble my father and to possess himself of our wealth! I am afraid of him! I almost hate him! Oh, I cannot marry him!"

She half arose to a sitting posture, clasped her hands in anguish, and added, more calmly:

"There must be some way of escape for me. There must be some other rescue for my father. This man is bad and vile, and it is said that the wicked shall not always triumph. Surely his evil work must be almost ended. I had rather die than marry him. Marry him!" she repeated, her voice acquiring strength and power. "I will marry him if I must, in order to save my father, but not until I have tried every other means of saving papa. I will not submit to this man's demands without a struggle. He has granted me a month in which to prepare for my marriage with him, and, during that month, I will use every energy to free my father and myself from his wretched tyranny. And then if he lead me to the altar I shall take with me the consciousness that human efforts were all unavailing to secure my freedom!"

Her face glowed with this new resolution, her hazel eyes flashed with determination, and her slender figure became instinct with sudden hopefulness and energy.

She passed her hand over her forehead as if to clear away the influence of her late-burning despair, and thought:

"It seems to me that papa would be safe if that paper upon which the fatal compact was written were only destroyed. It must be of great importance, for Therwell said he knew too much to bring it here, and that he had left it at Oakshaw. That paper must contain some acknowledgment which would criminate my father. If I could only obtain it!"

She gave herself up to thought, but it was evident by the colour that kindled and then faded from her cheeks, and by the light that now and then shone from her dark eyes, that she was maturing a plan by which to gain possession of the paper upon which so much depended.

At last she arose, put back her dishevelled hair with her hands, and looked from the window thoughtfully, and like one who looks with the mental rather than physical gaze.

"I must consult with papa," she mused. "I will go to him—"

She paused and started as a faint, timid rap, which she well knew, sounded upon her door.

Before she could take a step forward, or utter a

word, Sir Allyn Dare entered her room, and advanced with a slow and uneven step to the window.

Ilde put aside the curtains to give him free ingress, and then gave him a seat upon the couch, while she continued standing.

The baronet looked more than ever haggard, but there was a quietness about him now that showed how he had been worn out by his struggles. He looked weary, and utterly hopeless, as if at last he had resigned himself to his apparent destiny.

He had evidently expected to find his daughter in tears, and seemed surprised to see her calm and resolute.

"Ilde," he said, timidly, and as if hardly daring to put the question, "do you despise me for my miserable weakness?"

"Despise you, papa?" cried Ilde. "You know that I love you, and honour you."

She came to him, and kissed his forehead in a tender, pitying way that brought the ready tears to his eyes.

"I own that I was weak years ago," he said, "but there was a fearful combination against me. I could never have proved my innocence. But I would have held out against Therwell, if there had not been so many chances that he might never appear again. I never had a serious idea of marrying you to him."

"I believe you, papa."

"I am innocent, Ilde!" and her father's voice was full of pleading. "I am innocent of all wrong-doing. You believe me, do you not?"

Ilde looked into his beseeching eyes, and read in them the unstained record of his gentle soul. With a smile that warmed his half-frozen heart she assured him of her belief in his innocence, and then, with that tender motherliness that characterized her manner towards him, she drew his head down upon the pillows, and passed her hands, with a soft, magnetic touch, over his hot forehead.

"Dear papa," she said, gently, "if you had that paper upon which your compact with Therwell was written, would you not be freed for ever from his clutches?"

"I wish I had it!" he replied, eagerly. "I might then make terms with my enemy. If that were given the case would not be so dark against me. I was half mad when I signed it, Ilde. In case of a trial, if Therwell were to proceed to extremities, that paper would go heavily against me, for it would be interpreted as a personal acknowledgment of my guilt. If I could only get it! And his voice died away wearily as he imagined that his wishes were vain.

"If the paper were destroyed, papa, would you not be freed? Could you not then defy Therwell?"

"No, Ilde. Even if the paper were out of the way—and I would give half of my possessions to secure it—there are still three lives between me and safety!"

"Three lives, papa? I do not understand you."

"There are three witnesses against me, Ilde—three false witnesses, one of whom is Therwell. The others are his accomplices and the instruments of his will!"

"Who are they?" asked Ilde, her heart sinking at this revelation.

"One is Hoadley, the keeper of the Dare Arms, at Edenville. He was once employed in the family, but I could not of course retain him after—after I found out what he was. He insisted upon having the lease of the Dare Arms as the price of his silence, and I was only too glad to purchase it on those terms."

"So Hoadley is leagueed with Therwell against you, papa? I have often thought it strange that you allowed him to keep the inn, when he has been at times insolent and disrespectful. Where is the remaining witness, and who is he?"

"I do not know where he is. His name is Shawcross. He was of a wandering disposition, and, if alive, may be at this moment at the South Pole or among the Arctic regions. It is ten years since I heard of or from him, and then he was about to set out upon a long journey. He promised me faithfully that he would never return, but I have always believed that he would."

"Shawcross! It's an odd name, papa," said the girl. "I knew that Hoadley was once grandpapa's valet, but who was this Shawcross?"

A strange look came over the pale face of the baronet—a look composed of fear and hesitation—and then he said, hastily:

"Do not ask me, Ilde. Yet why should I not tell you? He was your grandfather's nurse in his last long illness!"

The maiden started, became paler, and Sir Allyn felt her hands tremble upon his forehead, over which they had continued to rest soothingly.

He shrank away from her, and looked up with agonized beseeching into her face, and encountered a look at once so tender, so trustful, so reverent, that

he caught his breath quickly to repress the choking sob that arose in his throat.

"Papa," said Ilde, firmly, "we must secure possession of that paper immediately. Therwell says he will give it up as soon as I become his wife, but I do not intend to wait a month for it. Besides, father, I may never marry him. Do not look frightened. I am going to try to get rid of his demands without sacrificing myself. Be hopeful in secret, father, for heaven will surely assist me in battling with Therwell. I am going to search for that document!"

"But it is at Oakshaw!"

"Then I must secretly go to Oakshaw in search of it," said Ilde, quietly. "Come, papa, do not be alarmed about me. I am young and strong, and able to protect you and myself. You must have confidence in me, and be surprised at nothing I may do."

She looked so determined that the baronet yielded assent to her wish, feeling at the same time that she hopes he had thought dead were capable of re-vivification.

"If you should go to Oakshaw, dear," he said, "you must not go alone."

"I shall not go alone, father."

"He may have hidden the paper somewhere about his desk, or in his library. You would have to be very cautious, and careful. I am afraid you will have your journey for nothing."

"There, papa, you are getting nervous again. Have faith and confidence in me, and I will do what I can. If I fail, then we will bear our hard lot with all the patience we may. You did not sleep last night, and you look thoroughly exhausted. You must let me put you to sleep!"

She arose and procured from her chamber a pretty crystal carafe filled with fragrant water, and then knelt by the couch, and proceeded gently to bathe her father's face with the cool, refreshing liquid.

Afterwards, she soothed him again with soft masonic touches, her hand falling gently and quietly upon his forehead and driving away from his temples the sullen pain that had long brooded there.

Her efforts were soon crowned with success. The pale eye-lids drooped over the weary eyes, the lashes rested upon the hollow cheeks, and Sir Allyn Dare slept peacefully, as he had not slept for weeks and months.

And then Ilde arose quietly, drew down the silken curtains, shutting out the sunlight from the little nook, and went into her chamber, letting the lace curtains fall around the sleeper.

Her first movement was to bathe her face with cologne-water to remove all traces of recent emotion. Her second was to gather up the loose masses of her shining hair, fastening them together with a couple of golden arrows.

Then, after glancing at her reflection in a long mirror niched between two windows, she noiselessly crossed the floor, and stole from the apartment, closing the door behind her.

She crossed the wide corridor, and knocked gently at the door opposite her own, and then, in obedience to a request from within, she opened the door, and entered the apartment.

It was similar in size to her own, but it had no oriel window, no silken hangings, no profusion of bijouterie, yet it was a pleasant, home-like room, with its tasteful furniture, and its evidences of feminine occupancy in the tiny baskets of bright Berlin wools, and scraps of embroidery, and in the inlaid guitar that lay on the window-seat, amidst two hillocks of new music.

This was the private room of Miss Arsdale, Sir Allyn Dare's ward, to whom allusion has been made.

At the moment of Ilde's entrance Miss Arsdale was reclining idly upon a velvet couch, her form loosely encircled by a dressing-gown, and holding a book in her hand.

She was a very ordinary-looking girl, with a plain, nearly ugly face, and with shy and retiring manners. She made no mere pretensions to wit than to beauty, belonging, as was apparent, to the class of common-place women; but like most of those very women she had certain attractions. Hers consisted in her ready affections, her quick sympathies and warm, candid heart. She was well educated, refined, and clinging in her disposition.

We have said that Ilde loved no one in the world but her father. We should have excepted Miss Arsdale, whom she regarded with sisterly affection, and who loved her in return with enthusiastic fervour, admiring her brave, noble nature, her gentleness, yet resoluteness, and exulting in her extraordinary loveliness.

"Good-morning, Kate," said Ilde, advancing towards the couch.

"Oh, is it you, Ilde?" exclaimed Miss Arsdale, springing up, and flinging aside her book. "Good morning, dear. I suppose it is nearly noon, and I am still in this wrapper," and she glanced ingenuously

down at her attire. "You have quite spoiled me since I came to Edencourt. I used to rise with the lark, but during the year I have been here I have breakfasted alone, so have had no inducement to get up. Is Sir Allyn well to-day?"

"Not very well," said Ilde. "He is weary and exhausted. Poor papa! I have hopes though that he will get better soon."

"I hope he will, Ilde, for your sake as well as his own. I have often thought, when you have attended upon him day and night for weeks without ceasing, that you were striving for a martyr's crown. I do believe you are the most devoted daughter in the world. There is nothing you would not do for Sir Allyn."

Ilde sighed softly and unconsciously.

"How grave and sad you look!" said Miss Arsdale, struck by the quietness of Ilde's manner. "You have worn yourself out at last."

"No, Kate, but I have something upon my mind. Can I make a partial confidant of you, and depend upon your thorough discretion and silence?"

Kate Arsdale answered in the affirmative. She was Ilde's senior by two years, but she looked up to the baronet's daughter with the respect and affection usually coming from a junior, and Ilde felt sure she would find a more faithful ally in her than in anyone else whom she knew.

"Sit down, Kate," she said, gravely. "I hardly know how to tell you what I wish, because I may be trenching upon a secret which is not mine to impart, and which in fact I do not myself understand. You know that papa has long been ill, that he has been troubled about something?"

"Yes, Ilde, but how can I be of any assistance—"

"Wait a minute, Kate," and now Ilde's voice grew hesitating, and a sorrowful look gathered in her eyes. "You see—that is papa has an enemy—a wicked, cruel man, who has got hold of a secret of papa's, and this man came here last night—"

"Was it he?" interrupted Kate. "I was awakened by a terrible knocking at the door, and I covered up my head with the blankets."

"It was," assented Ilde, her gravity increasing, and her gaze suddenly becoming restless and avoiding that of her friend. "On account of having a hold upon papa he came and insists upon marrying me."

"Upon marrying you? Is he young and handsome?"

"On the contrary, he is nearly as old as papa, and in my opinion very ill-looking."

"But what will you do? Why don't Sir Allyn send him away?"

"He cannot, dear. This man gives me a month in which to get ready to marry him, but I shall never do so if I can help it. There is a paper, Kate, that would help papa, if I could get it, and I must go for it. I want you to go with me. Will you be so brave for my sake?"

"I would go anywhere with you, Ilde," said Kate, impetuously. "When will you go?"

"Some night this week. I must think the matter over, and arrange my plans beforehand, or the journey may be fruitless. I must if possible discover where the paper is hidden. To accomplish this I must play a part with papa's enemy. Leave it all to me, Kate. I will plan, and we will execute together."

She offered no farther explanation of her intended proceeding, nor in regard to Therwell, and Kate Arsdale asked none. She was content to obey her younger friend unquestioningly, having the utmost reliance upon her wisdom and judgment.

They conversed together for an hour, Kate meanwhile making her toilet, they then went downstairs and into the garden, Ilde having first assured herself that Sir Allyn still slept.

From the garden they proceeded to the long shaded avenue leading from the lodge to the entrance of the dwelling. Here, arm-in-arm, they paced to and fro several times, inhaling the warmth and sweetness of the April day.

They still lingered there, when a woman came through the lodge-gates and slowly approached them with a worried step.

She was an elderly woman with a strong, powerful form, and a pale, sorrow-worn face. A few locks of gray hair escaped from beneath the brim of her bonnet. Her attire was neat and had once been elegant, her black silk dress betraying the remains of a former lustre, and her Paisley shawl had been well kept, though slightly faded.

There was a listening, watchful air about this woman, as if she were looking for someone, that struck Ilde at once.

"Let us go upon the terrace," said Kate Arsdale, taking a step in that direction. "You are too much troubled to meet this woman, whoever she may be. Come, Ilde!"

"No, Kate, dear," answered Ilde, gently; "she

looks tired and worn. Perhaps I might relieve her sorrows. The servants would but turn her away if she wanted help. I must see her."

The kind-hearted little maiden little knew how greatly that generous decision would influence her own future welfare.

She advanced with Kate to meet the new comer, who paused, bowed respectfully, and said:

"I am a stranger here, miss," and her glances singled out Ilde as the one to whom she addressed herself, "and I have walked far and am weary. I am no beggar, no tramp. I do not desire alms, but will you give me work?"

"Where is your home?" asked Ilde.

"I have none," was the sad reply. "I am homeless and friendless in my old age. But I can work, if you will only give me the opportunity. I was once prosperous, and I could not bear to remain near my old home when prosperity fled. I will be faithful, and will work for a simple home."

She spoke earnestly, her hollow eyes pleading for her more than her words. There was an air of refinement about her, and it was easy to see that she was truthful and sincere.

Ilde hesitated but a moment.

"It would be sad indeed," she said, "if anyone wanting work should fail to obtain it. The housekeeper said yesterday that she wished to procure a seamstress, and if you can undertake that position you shall not only find a good home, but a good salary. Mrs. Goss will arrange the terms with you. Come with me."

"Heaven bless you, young lady," exclaimed the wanderer, with grateful fervour. "And heaven will bless you, I know," she added, speaking to herself. "Oae so generous, so sweet, and so good, will not know much of sorrow."

Ilde and her friend conducted the woman to a side entrance, led her through the corridors and halls, until they reached the housekeeper's room. The young mistress of Edencourt then introduced the new comer to Mrs. Goss, the woman giving her name as Mrs. Amry, and requested that she should be engaged as seamstress.

"Have you any references?" asked the prudent housekeeper.

"Never mind the references this time, Mrs. Goss," said Ilde, noticing the red flush creeping over the woman's face. "I will vouch for Mrs. Amry. Order her a luncheon directly, please, for she has walked far this morning."

Mrs. Goss muttered something about references under her breath, but she hastened to comply good-naturedly with Ilde's commands, having, like all others at Edencourt, a profound respect and affection for her young mistress.

Ilde then, with a kind word to her elderly protégée, whom she promised to see again on the morrow, withdrew with Kate Arsdale to the drawing-room, leaving Mrs. Amry to the enjoyment of her luncheon as well as to the questionings of good Mrs. Goss.

But it was little that the worthy housekeeper gained by her inquiries. Either Mrs. Amry had nothing to tell beyond the fact that she had seen better days, or else she carried a secret well concealed under a simple exterior.

Rather annoyed at her non-success in learning the history of her seamstress, Mrs. Goss at last sent a servant to show the new comer to her room, and indulged her lamentations in solitude at the unworldliness and simplicity of Miss Dare, and her hopes that Mrs. Amry would not set the house on fire that very night and elope with the spoons.

Meanwhile, the object of her suspicions took possession of a neat attic chamber, with a half-expressed prayer of thanksgiving for the comfortable home in which she found herself installed.

"It is good to be settled at last, even for a little while," she murmured. "When I have earned a little money I will go forth again upon my search for him, but in the meantime I will take what little comfort I can; though heaven knows it's but little comfort I can appreciate. My heart is dead within me. Nothing can awaken it to life again except the sight of him upon whom I have vowed vengeance!"

By this time she had approached the window, and was looking down upon the lawn.

"A noble place!" she said. "Edencourt, they called it in the village, where they told me that if I could gain the hearing of Miss Dare I should be cared for. Heaven bless her sweet face, I say again—Ah, who is that?"

She had caught sight of a man's figure moving about among the trees on the lawn. The next moment it appeared in full view, and could be plainly seen to be that of Therwell.

"Is it possible?" demanded Mrs. Amry of herself, as she leaned breathlessly against the window-sill, and scanned the intruder earnestly. "Tis he, surely! 'Tis Therwell! Found! found at last!"

(To be continued.)



[INEZ TAKES THE OATH.]

SWEET ROSES YANGLED.

CHAPTER XXIV.

On the following morning, while at breakfast with her father, Inez received from her aunt a note summoning her to Newport, and with tremulous surprise she read the contents:

"SINCE I am informed that you have been at Oaklands two days this week, I presume that you have recovered sufficiently to visit me here. It is necessary that you should do so without delay, as I have that to say to you which is important to both of us."

"Treachery I scarcely looked for from you, Inez, though I have experienced little else from your father's hands from the day we first met."

"Return with Dick, for I am ill and wish to see you on business that cannot be delayed."

EUNICE HAWKS."

Mr. Lopez made an imperious gesture for the missive to be given to him, and asked:

"What can your aunt have to say that makes you change colour so, Inez?"

He glanced over the lines, his lip curling sardonically at the reference to himself, and he shrugged his shoulders as he went on:

"I wonder if she has an inkling of what took you to Oaklands. But even if she has that does not give her a right to accuse you of treachery. As to what I have been guilty of in that line where Eunice is concerned I am sure it would puzzle her to tell. Get ready at once, my dear, and go to this unreasonable old woman, and try to bring her to her right senses. She is only seeking an excuse for acting badly towards you, and your own conduct must not afford her one."

Though Inez was indignant at being summoned like a criminal to answer for her actions before her aunt, she thought it best to go, and see what was wrong, so she prepared for the visit, and was soon on her way to Newport.

She endeavoured to arrange in her own mind what she should say about her visit to Oaklands that would not betray the real object she had in view in going there; for she knew that Mrs. Hawks would never forgive any attempt on her part to recover a will the very existence of which she had strenuously denied.

But all her prearranged plans were set at naught by the first words of the old lady. She found her lying on a sofa, pale, and panting, with a letter clutched in her hands which she threw at her niece as soon as she was fairly in the room, and screamed:

"Read that, you ingrate, and tell me, how you dared to go to my house on such an errand as took you there! Books indeed! That wretched, old hypocrite pretended he wanted them only to get an opportunity to rob me of papers that I alone have a right to, if they were to be found at Oaklands. What do you say to the contents of that letter, you unprincipled girl?"

"In a tremor of dread and expectation, Inez picked the crumpled sheet from off the floor, and smoothed it out while Mrs. Perkins spoke to her mistress in a tone of remonstrance:

"I entreat that you won't be so violent, ma'am. If Miss Inez has done anything you disapprove, she only obeyed her father, and you ought not to hold her responsible."

"Hold your tongue, and get out of my sight. I am not going to be ruled by you or by her either, and I will yet prove more than a match for you both," was the furious response.

"But, ma'am, you will bring on another of them attacks, and of late your spasms have got to be frightful."

"Yes—and you only wish that I may die in one of them without making my will; but I shan't do it. I have sent for my lawyer, and he will be here in an hour. I shall make it this day, and do what I please with my money. Leave me with Inez. I don't want you putting in your officious tongue every moment while we are talking."

Mrs. Perkins made a dignified obeisance, and retired to the small dressing-room in which she slept, taking care, however, to leave the door ajar, to enable her to overhear all that passed in the chamber of her mistress.

In the meantime Inez read the following lines, evidently written in a disguised hand, and sent without a signature:

"NEWPORT, August 22, 18—"

"MADAM,—It becomes my painful duty to warn you of underhand doings among those who are most nearly connected with you."

"In the library at Oaklands is a secret receptacle in which valuable papers were concealed. By some means Mr. Lopez must have become aware of this, for he has sent his daughter on a visit to this place under the pretext of getting books for him. She was in that room alone for several hours, and she slept in the chamber which opens from it."

"I warn you that she removed from a niche in the wall a deed that is of the greatest importance to you. It must be recovered at all hazards, for your own interests are deeply concerned in it."

"Question Miss Lopez, and see if she will dare deny what I have here stated."

"Respectfully yours,

"INCOGNITO."

Inez read these lines over twice, and then folded the paper, and placed it on the table beside her aunt, undecided what defence to make.

Finding that she did not speak, Mrs. Hawks angrily cried out:

"I read guilt in your face. You cannot deny that you have committed this shameful robbery, for it is nothing less."

"It would not have been theft, Aunt Eunice, even if I had taken the deed to which this anonymous paper refers; but I did not do it. I declare to you that I brought nothing from Oaklands except the books you said my father might have. I have always spoken the truth to you, and I do not think you should doubt my word now because this unknown correspondent has seen fit to accuse me of such an action."

"But I do believe what he says. Your father has more than once insisted that some trumpery writing was in existence somewhere that would take from me the right to dispose of my fortune as I please. But I intend to show both him and you that I will do it in spite of your contemptible efforts to circumvent me. You have ruined yourself, Inez Lopez, by this last move you have made, for I'll give you a bare pittance. I'll not leave you to starve, because you are the child of my sister, but more than a living you shall never derive from your grandfather's estate."

"Very well, Aunt Eunice; I can have nothing to say to that. Of course you are at liberty to do what you choose with what you possess. I am not mercenary enough to do anything wrong to secure succession to the property that has been so long in my mother's family, and I assure you again that I brought from Oaklands nothing, except the books you gave papa permission to send for."

"Because you found nothing there then. Answer me truly, Inez; were you not sent there by your father on a tour of discovery? Had you not learned by some means the existence of the hiding-place spoken of in that letter? Did you not find and examine it, with the hope that papers belonging to me would be found there?"

Thus questioned, Inez could no longer prevaricate. She knew that with her aunt silence would condemn her as surely as the truth, so she determined to speak it, let the consequences be what they might.

She lifted her eyes to the fierce and angry face that confronted her, and calmly said:

"You cannot blame my father for desiring to recover the will he has every reason to believe was made by my grandfather, which secures to me at least a fair portion of his fortune. He learned in a singular manner that a secret receptacle existed in the library at Oaklands, in which it was concealed, and he did send me thither to search for it. I found the place he described, but it was empty. Someone had visited it before me, and removed whatever had been placed there."

Mrs. Hawks listened to this explanation in a state of excitement that was frightful to witness. She gasped and struggled for breath, and at length lay back so pallid and exhausted that Inez expected every moment to see her seized with one of her most fearful spasms.

She hastened to bathe her face, and to administer reviving drops, and after a long interval of suspense the angry woman revived, and regained the power of speech.

"By doing this thing, Inez Lopez, you have sealed your own ruin. I will never forgive you for it—never! I cannot tell if you are speaking the whole truth; but you will not dare to swear to a falsehood on the holy cross I am hanging from your neck. Kneel down here beside me—press it to your lips and swear to me that you found nothing in that recess at Oaklands. Do this, or I shall cut you off with a shilling. You may starve for all I shall care after this shameful and unbecoming proceeding on your part."

Inez took the plain gold cross she always wore suspended from a black ribbon around her throat, and pressing it reverently to her lips, took the oath required of her. Then, rising from the kneeling position she had assumed, with simple dignity she said:

"I have done this, Aunt Eunice, to quiet your agitation, for you are exciting yourself more than is good for you. My father may have been wrong in sending me on such an errand, but he did not think so; nor can I blame him when I remember all that he thinks at stake for his only child. You will get over your anger now that you feel assured nothing resulted from the search I confess to having made."

Mrs. Hawks regarded her with cold and angry eyes.

"You speak as if this be a trifle—as if I could find it possible to forgive it, but I shall not. What led your father to entertain such suspicions? How did he learn the existence of a place of deposit I never heard hinted at before?"

Inez changed colour, and after a pause reluctantly replied:

"My father dreamed of it, Aunt Eunice. He insists that my mother came to him, warned him of the existence of the recess and what was concealed in it. I put no faith in his vision, and I deferred going to Oaklands as long as possible; but when I found the cavity in the wall which he had so minutely described I was compelled to believe that through some supernatural means he had been actually warned of its existence."

Mrs. Hawks raised herself on her elbow with dilated eyes and parted lips. She faltered:

"What is that you tell me? Inez—Inez came to your father and warned him of what neither she nor I ever knew. It is incredible. Mr. Lopez must have been aware in former days that such a hiding-place existed. It could never have learned about it in that way. It is impossible."

"He declares that he never heard of it till the vision came to him. My mother told him that she derived the information from my grandfather, and she bade him send me to seek for that which would restore to me what has been so long unjustly withheld."

The last words had scarcely passed the lips of the speaker before she was aware of their imprudence. Mrs. Hawks furiously repeated:

"Unjustly! How dare you use such a word in connection with me? Your mother was disinherited because she stabbed the old man to the heart by her unbecoming conduct. He never meant that any portion of his wealth should descend to her child, and I shall take good care that his wishes in that respect are not thwarted. I shall no longer defer making my will, and you may tell your father that his own want of principle is the cause of your being disinherited. I shall leave you enough to live on respectably, but no more; and, after what has just happened, I think myself very generous to do even that for you."

Inez bent her head, but she had no reply to make, and Mrs. Hawks went on:

"You have no thanks for small favours, I suppose. But why should I expect them from a girl who was so anxious to grasp my whole estate as to do what you have lately done? Till now I have hesitated as to the justice of giving my fortune to one who is a comparative stranger to me, but I shall do so no longer. I have sent for my lawyer, and before this day is over I shall make such a disposition of my property as will effectually cut you off from its en-

joyment. An annuity for life shall be secured to you, but nothing more. That is all I have to say, and you may repeat it to your father as soon as you choose. You can call Perkins now."

"Aunt Eunice, I cannot give such a message as that to my poor father, for it would kill him. There is no need to tell him of your intentions. He may not live to know that I have been cut off by you for a stranger. He is dying, aunt. He cannot last much longer, I fear; and—and—oh! Aunt Eunice, have you no pity for me?—none for that broken-down man, who will never be able to outlive the certainty that his child has lost your favour through his offence? If he had not sent me to Oaklands I should never have grieved, you well know, and he will blame himself for being the cause of evil to me."

Unmoved by this appeal, Mrs. Hawks icily said:

"Your father is slowly poisoning himself with the drug he uses to such excess. If he dies, it will not be because I choose to disappoint his hopes for you, but from the natural result of his own sinful self-indulgence. I have long seen what the end must be, but it is useless to reason with such a man as he is. I insist that you shall tell him what has passed between me to-day, that he may understand and appreciate the evil results of his own conduct. As to Inez coming back to him to reveal the hiding-place of a will that never was made, it is all nonsense. In his visits to Oaklands, before he persuaded my sister to run off with him, he has pried into every cranny, and discovered the recess in the wall. He had, no doubt, forgotten its existence till a dream brought back his memory, and he thought it best to find out if anything were concealed in it; so he sent you on this shameful errand. That is a far more rational explanation than the one Mr. Lopez chooses to give, and it is the only one I shall choose to put faith in. I am tired—I must rest before Mr. Moody comes. Call Perkins, and you can join Miss Gordon in the room, if you wish it."

"Excuse me, aunt; I will return home if you please. My father is too much indisposed to do without me long."

"Umph! jealous I suppose! Well, you have good cause for it if you only know all," muttered Mrs. Hawks.

She then spoke, in a louder key:

"Do as you will, child; only call Perkins to me before you go. This is the second time I have told you I want her, and you haven't moved yet. I suppose you think as you are not to get any fortune it doesn't matter whether you do as I bid you or not."

Inez arose, and, after tapping on the door of the dressing-room, Mrs. Perkins came from it, looking uneasy and irritated. She had heard every word that had passed between her mistress and her niece, and in this first moment of defeat she could think of nothing but the treachery of her young ally; for she felt assured that Rosa must have used all her arts in her own interests to have brought about such a crisis as the present one.

Mrs. Perkins silently offered her mistress the attentions she needed; and, after being so summarily dismissed, Inez only paused to say:

"Good-bye, aunt!" and effected her escape from the room.

When Mrs. Hawks was comfortably placed upon her pillows the waiting-woman curtly asked:

"Will you tell me what that lawyer is really coming here for, ma'am? I hope to heaven that you were only taunting Miss Inez when you said what you did before I went out. You can't be, in earnest, ma'am?"

"I shall soon show you whether I am or not," was the peevish reply. "Don't worry me now, Perkins, for I am tired and must rest."

"You'll soon have time enough to rest if heaven will let you lie down in peace after you have done such a wrong as you threatened just now. What will you say to your own father and sister when you meet them in the other world, if you've gone and given the old man's fortune to an undermining stranger and left your own blood next to nothing? Do you think they'll take you by the hand and welcome you with songs of joy? Not they after you've done such a crying wrong to the poor child that's just left you half broken-hearted."

What effect this appeal might have had no one can say had Mrs. Hawks heard it; but it was scarcely commenced when she fell into a slight convulsion, which was followed by the sudden and deep sleep which always followed her attacks.

While her senses were locked in oblivion it was dangerous to attempt to arouse her, for if such a thing happened she invariably fell into one of her most frightful spasms.

As Mrs. Perkins looked down on her changed face she resentfully muttered:

"If I thought she'd die in the fit I believe I could find it in my heart to wake her up; but she'd be

sure not to die. She'd revive so as to make that will cutting my poor darling off for that deceitful young viper. I wonder how I could have trusted that treacherous face. She ain't like Anna Moore for nothing. I know that she kept the old man's anger alive against poor Miss Inez, and she did it that the money might all be left to this one. She never liked Miss Inez much, and after all that fuss about the Hastings affair it is easy to understand that no love was lost between them."

Although apparently asleep the consciousness of Mrs. Hawks seemed half awake, for the name spoken by her attendant smote a cord that instantly vibrated, and she faintly whispered:

"Anna Moore—Anna Moore! Yes, I was very fond of her! We were more to each other than Inez and I, and this girl is strangely like her. Don't you see that is why I am drawn towards her? She brings me back my youth. It is but just. Anna's influence gained me half that I have, so I'll rescue this girl from dependence by giving all to her. I suspect—I almost know who she is, though she does not herself. But what does that matter? I love her as I did her mother before her, and I'll do what I please with my own."

Mrs. Perkins imperfectly caught the drift of these disjointed mutterings, and she wrung her hands in impotent despair. She felt that she must vent her wrath on someone, and she glided across the parlour, and after a slight tap on the door of Rosa's room unceremoniously entered. She found that young lady reclining in a large chair reading, for it was yet too early in the day for her to be summoned to her duties.

Rosa laid her book aside, and with her engaging smile looked up at the stormy face of her visitor and sweetly asked:

"My dear Mrs. Perkins, has anything happened to annoy you? Your face has a very singular, not to say sinister expression. I hope that you are not angry with me, for I have really done all that was in my power to carry out your wishes since I have been near Mrs. Hawks."

The woman shook her finger emphatically towards her, and excitedly replied:

"You are capable of anything, Miss Gordon—you are. You think to come over me now with your soft words, when you've been and done all you could to get around that old woman in yonder, and make her believe that you are fit to be trusted with her money. You've sent Miss Inez to the right about; but I've come to tell you that if my mistress is silly enough to make a will in your favour, it won't be worth the paper it's writ on. I know that a settlement was made that gave the estate back to the heir of the Hor-ton's after Mrs. Hawks dies, and that paper shall be found yet if it is above ground."

Rosa listened to this long address with an air of innocent astonishment.

She quietly said:

"I hope it is so, Mrs. Perkins, for I assure you that I have no wish to deprive Miss Lopez of her inheritance. If Mrs. Hawks entertains such liberal intentions towards me, I was far from suspecting them; but she will think better of it. So capricious a woman as she is can scarcely be relied on. To-day she is offended with her niece, but to-morrow she will be in a good humour with her again. I promise to do all that is in my power to appease her anger, but to do that I must know its cause."

"As if you hadn't found that out already," exclaimed Mrs. Perkins, contemptuously. "Catch a vessel asleep indeed! I see through you at last, Miss Gordon, and you can't deceive me any longer. You've only been trying to feather your own nest while pretending to be looking after the interests of Miss Inez. You've won the first play, but the odd trick has to come yet, and you shall find out that Miss Lopez will hold the winning card!"

The eyes of Rosa flashed, and an expression of superb disdain curled her ruby lips. To look upon her then, one would have declared her to be the very incarnation of truth and outraged honour.

She hastily replied:

"It matters little to me, Mrs. Perkins, who may or may not hold the winning card, as you call it. Early know that I have done my duty by the poor old lady of whom you speak so disrespectfully. My heart has been touched with pity for her condition, and it is my manner of expressing sympathy has won on her affections, am I to blame for it, I ask you? Mrs. Hawks's niece neglects her, not vitally, I believe; but still she rarely visits her, and if her aunt contrasts my devotion with her indifference, can you wonder that she prefers me to her? I beg that you will not permit yourself to address me in such a manner again, for I cannot submit to be insulted with impunity. I believe you to be a good woman, and I know you to be an excellent nurse, but even those qualities may be outweighed by the faults of temper you have displayed to-day."

The cool impertinence of this address actually ap-

called the frate listener. For a few moments she stood open-mouthed and breathless, incapable of articulating a word. Then with a deep inspiration she ejaculated:

"Well, this does beat all! That I should live to hear myself talked to in such a way by a slip of a girl that was took in the family but the other day."

Before she could add more Rosa pointed to the door, and peremptorily said:

"I will do more than talk, Mrs. Perkins, if you do not leave me without adding to the insults you have already given me. You will oblige me by remembering that I have taken the position of Mrs. Hawks's adopted daughter, and as such I claim respectful treatment from her dependants. If you wish to retain your place you must change your tactics towards me, or I will use the power I have gained in a way that will not be very agreeable to you. A word to the wise is sufficient. You can go now, as I think we fully understand each other."

In the excess of her rage, and astonishment at this calm assumption of superiority, Mrs. Perkins actually left the room without another word. Her tongue seemed paralyzed, and all her faculties in such a state of confusion that she thought it best to retreat, even if there were ignominy in doing so, till she had time to reflect, and arrange some plan that promised to defeat the manoeuvres of the enemy.

Rosa Gordon had measured her own strength, and believed her footing too secure to be shaken by her adversary, or she would never have dared to defy her in this insolent manner. Such was the conviction of the waiting-woman; but after long reflection on the scene that had just passed, she consoled herself by repeating a piece of wisdom gathered from her own experience in life.

"It's the long head that wins at last, and that girl is lighter than chaff; cunning as she is, I'll be more than even with her yet, clever as she thinks herself."

Thus muttering, Mrs. Perkins sat down beside her mistress to fan her, and he at hand when she awoke.

At the end of half an hour Mrs. Hawks opened her eyes and asked:

"Has Mr. Manly come yet? How long have I been asleep?"

"Not very long, madam. The lawyer ain't come yet, and when he does I hardly think you're strong enough to see him to-day."

At this Mrs. Hawks opened her eyes wide, allowing the ghastly white ring around the pupil in its greatest extent. She scornfully said:

"I am quite well enough to do what you have often urged on me. Help me into the parlour, and place me comfortably before Mr. Manly comes; for the sun shall not go down before my will is made."

"Won't it be better to let your anger cool down before you see him, for Miss—?"

"Hold your tongue. Don't mention the name of my niece in my presence again to-day; if you do, I'll cut her off with half the annual sum I thought of leaving her. Give me your arm. I don't feel strong enough to walk alone."

Swelling with wrath and humiliation, Mrs. Perkins bit her lips to keep back the words that sprang to them, and silently afforded the required assistance.

Mrs. Hawks was placed in a large cushioned chair, with a pillow at her back, and she then ordered a table to be drawn near her, on which pens, ink and paper were placed ready for use.

Rosa was then summoned, and Mrs. Perkins dismissed, with orders to call a cab and go to the Glades, with the information that everything was prepared for the execution of the will which was to cut her off from her inheritance.

In speechless rage she left the apartment, and no sooner had the door closed on her than the pretty young hypocrite, who had so successfully carried out her own plans, leaned over the chair of the infuriated old lady, and, kissing her with a cheek, menacingly said:

"You look better to-day, dear madam; and this cap is very becoming. You don't know how nice and sweet looking you are in it."

"Nonsense, child, don't try to flatter me. In my young days I had some pretensions to good looks, but ill health and mental suffering have destroyed them. I have not been a happy woman, Rosa, and to you I owe the little gleam of sunshine that falls on me now. I am deserted and betrayed by my own blood, and you are all that is left to console me. I hope that you really do care for me a little, child?"

There was a wistful tone in her voice, and Rosa hesitated to dispel the doubt her words seemed to imply.

She kissed the tremulous hands that lay so helplessly before her, and, kneeling on a cushion that brought her face on a level with that of her benefactress, she spoke in tones that seemed to vibrate with emotion:

"Do I care for you a little? Ah, dear Mrs. Hawks, be more just to your poor Rosa. I cling to you as my only friend—I love you as if you were my mother. Till I knew you I was utterly alone in the world—a castaway with no position in life, no heart to lean on; but you, in your sublime benevolence, have given me both. Only let me love you as my heart prompts, and you will feel that you have indeed gained a dutiful and affectionate daughter in adopting me."

She spoke so close to the old lady's ear that she heard and understood every word of this ardent address, and responded to it by saying:

"I believe it, Rosa, and I will this day prove to you how highly I appreciate your devotion. No one shall stand between you and me. I will do all for you that a mother could do for her own child."

While Rosa was profusely pouring forth her thanks and protestations a knock came to the door, and Mrs. Hawks hurriedly said:

"That will do, my love. There is the lawyer I sent for to make my will. Open the door and ask him in, for I am anxious to get the thing done and off my mind."

Rosa's heart bounded wildly. She knew that Mrs. Hawks was furiously angry with her niece on account of her visit to Oaklands, and she imagined the best results to herself from this sudden determination to execute her last testament while in this state of feeling towards her.

She moved swiftly towards the door, opened it, and admitted a grave-looking man, past middle age, who bowed profoundly before her, and announced himself as Mr. Manly.

Mrs. Hawks greeted him as an old acquaintance, motioned him to a seat, and then, turning to her young companion, said:

"You can go to your own room now, my dear, as I have business of importance to discuss with Mr. Manly. If I should need you, you will be within call."

Rosa promptly obeyed; but, as she told Kitty Bates, she left the door of communication imperfectly closed, and listened to all that passed after the arrival of the lawyer.

Mr. Manly drew his chair nearer to the table beside which his client sat, and spoke in a harsh, metallic voice, the peculiar ring of which enabled Mrs. Hawks to comprehend what he was saying.

"It is many years since we met, madam, and time has not dealt lightly with either of us. But pray excuse me; I forgot that ladies don't like to hear of such changes, so we will turn to a more agreeable subject. Your niece is a very lovely girl, I must say. I have seldom seen so beautiful a blonde."

Mrs. Hawks's wrath was rising at the supposed praise of her niece, but his concluding words enlightened her as to the mistake she had made, and she graciously said:

"The young lady who has just left us is not my niece, but my adopted daughter. I have sent for you to-day to recognize the claims legally as such, and to execute my will in her favour."

The man of law opened wide his light gray eyes, and stammered, in a perturbed manner:

"What—what becomes of the claims of your niece, madam? Excuse me, Mrs. Hawks, but I do not think that your father contemplated the possibility that his grand-daughter would be disinherited, and his estate left to an alien. You surely cannot mean that the whole of your large fortune shall descend to an adopted daughter?"

"That is precisely my intention, Mr. Manly, and all you have to do is to carry out my wishes, for which purpose I caused you to be summoned here. If my father had designed any portion of his wealth to descend to the child of the daughter he had himself cast off, he would have made some provision to that effect. Since he did not do so, I feel myself at liberty to dispose of the whole estate according to my own wishes. I shall provide for my niece by leaving her an annuity sufficient for her to live on, but the bulk of my fortune shall go to Rosa Gordon, the young girl who has just left us. She is far more to me than ever Inez has been."

Mr. Manly listened respectfully, but he was evidently much agitated. He arose, and took several turns across the floor, apparently debating in his own mind what he should say. At length he again resumed his seat, and somewhat huskily spoke:

"In this conjuncture of affairs it becomes my painful duty to inform you, madam, of what I had hoped no one beside myself might ever know. There was a will drawn up by Mr. Horton himself and witnessed by myself, and one other person who is since dead. I cannot tell you precisely what it contained, for I was not permitted to read it over, but after it was sealed your father said to me:

"This will secure the succession of the estate to my grand-daughter. I will place it where it will be safe till the time for its use arrives. I will furnish

you with a clue to its hiding-place, which must not be invaded till Inez Lopez attains her nineteenth year."

"I accepted the trust, and Mr. Horton gave me a small sealed package endorsed on the back:

"To be opened by Roger Manly on the fourteenth of August, eighteen hundred and fifty-four—the day Inez Lopez completes her nineteenth year."

"Now, madam, comes the painful and humiliating part of my revelation. That paper, which contained the secret of the hiding-place formed for Mr. Horton's last will, has been stolen from the tin box in which it was kept. Heaven knows by whom, for I have no means of discovering. I was naturally curious to know what it contained, and on the very day named I sought for the package in vain. It had been abstracted by whom or for what purpose I cannot conjecture."

The two looked at each other a moment in silence, then with a movement of contempt Mrs. Hawks said:

"You seem to take remarkable care of the interests of your clients I must say. Such a trust as that should have been placed where it was impossible for anyone to reach it but yourself, and your carelessness is inexcusable."

"So I believed it was placed, Mrs. Hawks, I have in my office substantial boxes, with patent locks, labelled with the different letters of the alphabet, and in letter H the papers relative to your father's estate were kept. The one I refer to was among them."

"And were they the only papers in that box?"

"No, madam. Howard, Hathaway, Hawkins, and Hopkinson were all in the same receptacle; that is, deeds, &c., belonging to those gentlemen, were there. But I allowed no one access to the boxes but myself."

"How do you account for the disappearance of this paper, then?"

"It must have been taken away when I was ill. I had a sudden attack of insensibility while in my office not long since, and when I got over it I found that my bunch of keys had been left several hours lying on my desk. I examined into my papers as well as I could, but it was some time before I was strong enough to do much. When the fourteenth of August came round I opened the H box, and looked to my dining that it had been robbed of the very thing I was in search of. That is the whole tenor of the matter, Mrs. Hawks, humiliating as it is to me to confess it."

Mrs. Hawks meditated a few moments, and then asked:

"Could anyone in the interest of Mr. Lopez have committed the theft?"

"If that had been so, you would have heard from that gentleman before now, madam, for I am very certain that at the age named his daughter was the come into possession of a large portion of the estate you hold so absolutely your own. No, what was taken that paper intended to serve his own private ends by doing so, and Miss Lopez will have to pay a large sum if she ever recovers it."

(To be continued.)

CAUGHT IN HER OWN TOWLS.

That Rosalie Mendon was the belle and beauty of Mendonville was no more than enough to tempt to envy; and that Rosalie Mendon was a charming, heartless coquette—the feminine portion, at least, of Mendonville were only too glad to admit. Indeed, it was the delight of certain old ladies—chiefly antique maidens—in Rosalie's native town to meet together once a week and industriously exchange sayings and doings of that young lady during the week which had passed since the last meeting.

Painful to state, Rosalie was not altogether innocent of the many hard things which were said of her. The bitter words of young maidens like herself and the ominous shakings of ancient heads were not all the result of envy and jealousy and old-maidish spleen.

Rosalie gave very strong evidence of being heartless. Beside the fact of her being very pretty, very charming, and in every way the favourite of fortune—mean of which things could really have been charged against her as faults—she had a truly aggravating way of using all her fascinations to win away the lovers of her companions and rivals; and then, when she had won them, of easily laughing at them—sneeringly telling them she had never been serious even in a thought regarding them, and contemptuously advising them to return to their old loves.

A few accepted this advice, were forgiven, and reinstated in the affections of their snubbed ones, when they loved more, and heartily joined with in railing against Rosalie's coquetry; a few more attempted to put her advice in force, but were indignantly dismissed by their neglected lady-loves—

as they richly deserved—and were very generally laughed at by the community at large; but a still greater number upbraided the false coquette with burning and even insulting words, and left her with curses on the hour they had first seen her.

Strange to say, though Rosalie was a proud girl—not without sensibility too, and, at times, even tender-hearted—the despair she caused never cost her a tear; nor did the indignant reproaches, often poured forth upon her once enkindle her spirit to anger; she even enjoyed these passionate transports of rage against her as the strongest proof of her power over her victims.

But this is a state of mind and feeling peculiar to the true coquette; it is absolutely impossible for any woman to be a thorough flirt whose heart is susceptible to the higher emotions and liable to become at any time a prey to pity and remorse.

Rosalie had pretty well exhausted the flirting resources of Meadowville. There was not a young man of any pretensions to good looks, good manners, or any single attraction whatever, whom she had not reviewed with a critical eye, and openly flirted with, if she considered him worth her while. And now, Meadowville being exhausted, Rosalie began to sigh for fresh fields and pastures new. She took it into her pretty little head one day to tease her father to take her to London to spend a winter.

Mr. Meadows was a rich man and a widower; Rosalie was his only child and the light of his eyes. He had never refused her anything since the day he buried his pretty young wife; and so Miss Meadows went to London.

There she met a very different class of young men to those she had been accustomed to in Meadowville; and she found herself quite as much admired as in her native town; for youth and beauty and a hundred thousand pounds are quite as charming in London as any other great city, as in the provinces.

Rosalie, notwithstanding her many former triumphs, was almost intoxicated by the mere elegant homage of town; and it is impossible to conjecture what might have been the end of all this gaiety if our young coquette had not awoke one morning to the amazing discovery that she possessed a heart—a heart which at the remembrance of one voice throbbled, and beat, and burned, and sent the rushing colour in waves of crimson to her face to tell her that she was in love.

Among the half-hundred young men whom Rosalie had met since she left Meadowville was an artist—handsome, talented, and petted by all the lovers of distinguished people in London.

Mr. Howard Vining was quite different from any one whom Rosalie had ever known, either in her native town or among the more fashionable people she had met in the great city; for one thing, he did not seem at all overcome by her many graces and fascinations, and rather neglected her even when she was most beautiful; and, as always happens in such cases, Rosalie was mightily piqued by this remarkable course of conduct on the part of the young artist.

But that could not blind her to the fact that he was the handsomest man she had ever seen, and possessed a voice that was music to her ears. He sang too, and sang well—with power, sweetness, and expression; and his singing charmed the heart as well as the ear of Rosalie Meadows, till at last she was thunder-struck when she felt that she loved—actually loved Mr. Vining; and hardly dared to hope that he returned the feeling.

Rosalie would have marked out a certain course to pursue in this emergency if she could have decided what to do; but she could not, for, unexpectedly, she found herself met the attacking party; and she felt that all her efforts were necessary to defend her from becoming mere in the enemy's power. Accordingly she became reserved and timid, with just sufficient bashfulness when in Mr. Vining's presence to render her attractive and interesting.

Mr. Vining, considerably spoiled by over-much flattery and petting, took very little notice of Rosalie while she had been only one of the rich, pretty and well-dressed young ladies whom he was accustomed to meet; but when she took to blushing and faltering under his gaze, and sometimes gave a quick little nervous start if he chanced to address her suddenly, he observed her more attentively.

He found that she was unusually pretty, and that too in a way that suited his artistic eye; she was petite and graceful, and quite a model as to form and elegance. Her features were small and delicate; her mouth was like a little bow of ruby velvet; her complexion all pearl and peach-bloom, and her large gray eyes of a dozen different shades in as many minutes. And then such a wealth of fair brown, floss-like hair, neither smooth nor curling, but flowing about in soft, wavy masses, as was of itself sufficient to win the heart of any lover of beauty.

Mr. Vining sketched the pretty face, framed in its

wonderful hair, half a dozen times; and then he begged Rosalie to sit to him for a full-length picture. She consented, and she triumphed greatly in having won such a tribute of his admiration; for she could not learn that he had ever yet paid any other woman a similar compliment. She began to indulge hopes; and something of her original saucy coquetry returned; but Vining was already interested, and her little airs and graces only made her more charming to him.

"I have won him!" thought Rosalie; and she had never yet known such triumph as she experienced in this conquest, but she felt no desire to throw aside the heart which had cost her so many doubts, fears and hopes.

She acknowledged to herself that she loved at last; and when, as sometimes happened, some caprice on the part of her admirer would set her wondering whether he really loved her, she for the first time felt occasional twinges of conscience for the pain she had caused others. This was to her the very strongest proof of the wonderful change which had come over her, and she thought with dread and dismay of what her future would be, if it indeed should happen that he whom she loved was only trifling with her as she had trifled with so many.

Indeed it was some time before Mr. Vining could make up his mind what he should do; that Rosalie was a coquette he perceived even while he allowed himself to become each day more fascinated with her, but that she really loved him he felt assured from the first.

The full-length portrait was nearly finished, and the season was drawing to a close. Mr. Meadows had already told Rosalie that the day was fixed upon for their return to Meadowville. Vining at last decided to hazard an avowal of his love; and Rosalie did not receive his declaration with the customary scornful triumph. She listened with glowing and averted face; and the voice that softly murmured, "Yes, I love you, Howard," was almost inaudible; but he heard it, for when did any lover fail to understand the voice that said, "I love you!" though it were fainter than the sighing of dying zephyrs?

And so Rosalie Meadows was betrothed, and a considerable talk that circumstance occasioned when it became known in Meadowville. The prevailing feeling, however, was one of unalloyed pleasure, for now the dangerous and beautiful little creature who had wrought such terror in the hearts both of mamma and daughters was fast tied up and could do no farther harm.

For a time after Rosalie's return to Meadowville she was very subdued, gave up her whole existence apparently to reading and answering her lover's letters, and seemed to have become actually blind to the existence of eligible partners to a flirtation. Howard Vining took advantage of the first warm weather to visit Meadowville, ostensibly on a sketching-tour, but really to enjoy the society of his fair lady-love, with whom he might be seen constantly rambling about through all the pretty walks about the place or riding horseback in a style which drove Rosalie's former suitors to despair.

That he was very handsome every girl in Meadowville acknowledged after a single minute's observation, while the male portion, especially those who had admired Rosalie, vied with each other in bestowing the epithets of "vain, stuck-up popinjay—conceited city swell, and foppish painter," upon the more fortunate object of fortune's and Rosalie's smiles.

The devotion of the lovers became quite a proverb, and kind friends sincerely congratulated Miss Meadows on having chosen a lover who would not permit her to look, think, or even breathe, except as he approved.

Rosalie's vanity, quick to take fire, was instantly in a flame at those words.

"Oh, they think I fear him!" she exclaimed. "Perhaps—who knows?—they fancy I dare not flirt lest I might lose him. They shall see."

Summer was coming on apace, and one very bright and warm day a picnic was arranged for the following day in case the weather should prove propitious.

The weather was fine and the sun smiled his warmest and brightest. The spot selected for the picnic was some three or four miles outside of Meadowville—the picturesque ruins of a tumble-down old house which had served as the retreat of loyalists during the Revolution. Vining had not formally asked Rosalie to go with him, regarding it as a matter of course that she would do so.

Accordingly, at the appointed hour in the morning, he drove up to the door in a pretty little pony-carriage which he had ordered from London for her especial use. To his astonishment he found her dressed in her most becoming riding-habit—blue, with a little jockey hat to match, that set off her blonde beauty to the utmost advantage.

Several young ladies and gentlemen surrounded her, admiring her habit, and complimenting her beautiful horse, everyone dying with curiosity to see how she was going to act with regard to Vining and his pony-carriage.

"Why, Rosie, do you prefer to ride?" exclaimed Vining. "Now it will waste time for me to go and get my horse—why couldn't you have sent me word what you wanted to do? Loop up your habit, and get into the carriage, won't you?"

"I'm going to ride, thank you," said Rosalie, carelessly drawing on her glove, and giving it to a gentleman beside her to button.

"Now, be reasonable, Rosie—don't you see how long it will take me to make a change?" returned Vining, impatiently.

"But there's no occasion to make any change, Mr. Vining; I have promised to accompany Mr. Newton—and here he comes. You are a minute and a half late, Frank."

And she shook her little riding-whip at the new comer, a handsome young man who sat his horse with singular ease and grace, and looked altogether a very formidable rival even for Howard Vining.

"A thousand pardons, Miss Rosalie," he said. "You have done me too much honour to wait for me."

"I couldn't help myself, or I wouldn't," was the reply, with all the speaker's arch coquetry, as she looked roguishly into the face that was now close beside her; she accepted his offered hand and sprang lightly into the saddle.

The next moment the pair galloped off together, heading the party of pic-nickers, who, after some little difficulty, were all arranged in various carriages.

Howard Vining had borne this extraordinary freak on the part of his betrothed with admirable coolness. At the first a very faint flush mounted to his brow when Rosalie announced her intention of accepting another escort than his own; but an instant after he needed his head with easy nonchalance, saluted Frank Newton when he arrived, and, turning away, took no farther notice of Rosalie or her companion.

Presently he said, perceiving there was some difficulty in disposing of all parties:

"Cannot I offer anyone a place in my carriage?—here is room enough going to waste."

"How stupid of us not to have thought of that," exclaimed someone. "Here is Miss Allan, Mr. Vining—everybody is disposed of but this very charming young lady."

Vining sprang from the carriage at once and assisted Miss Allan to enter it. He busied himself for several minutes in making her comfortable, and there were many other fair maidens who blamed themselves for their haste in selecting places in the other carriages, and their blindness in not perceiving that Vining's was vacant.

Meantime Howard and his companion, who had met many times before, were conversing like old friends. Christine Allan was a very handsome, brilliant girl; and by many thought more beautiful than Rosalie; but she had never been looked upon as a rival for the fair coquette and possibly abhorred the art of flirtation. She was somewhat haughty, did not look upon the male species as superior beings; and was, indeed, a trifle disposed to regard them with contempt.

Ill-natured people might have called her "strong-minded," and in the sense of not being weak-minded she certainly would have deserved the reproach; but Christine had no enemies in Meadowville; and consequently no one ever bestowed the obnoxious epithet upon her. She was not strong-minded; she was only young and quite inexperienced; and when it is remembered that her opinion of mankind was founded upon these specimens of the race which came under her observation in Meadowville, and which had, one and all, united in bowing down before Rosalie Meadows, her small regard for them is not so very much to be wondered at.

Mr. Vining found Christine a very charming companion; and could Rosalie have known how very little he missed her pretty, winning little ways, but somewhat shallow conversation, while listening to the brilliant and witty remarks of Christine, she would have considered deeply before abandoning her lover to the dangers of such another *tête-à-tête*.

But Rosalie was quite unconscious that she was hazarding her position in Mr. Vining's heart; she never dreamed that he would retaliate by devoting himself to another, but she was sufficiently provoked by the cool manner in which he received her own capricious behaviour.

Her chagrin was greatly increased when Mr. Vining arrived in company with Christine, and apparently unconscious of the existence of anybody else; and it required all her tact to conceal her discomfiture.

She did conceal it, however, and kept up one of the most brilliant flirtations she had ever been engaged in with Mr. Frank Newton. But in all her life she had never been so utterly miserable; for Vining continued most provokingly indifferent to the most flattering encouragement which she chose to bestow on Newton; and even persisted in ignoring all her little arts to win himself again to her side.

As for Christine, she was at first amused and at last interested by this curious study. She had not been disposed to admire Mr. Vining at the beginning; in her eyes he was only another of the many admirers of Rosalie Meadows, and therefore could not amount to much of anything.

But his manner of resenting Rosalie's disposition to trifle with her engagement to him quite won her respect, and forced her to acknowledge that men were not all the shallow, silly fools she had unjustly thought them. The spirit of mischief entered into her too, and her feminine instinct for power was a little aroused by the evident impression she had made on Mr. Vining.

She seconded all his designs for punishing Rosalie most ably, and earned for herself a few ill-natured remarks to the effect "that she was no more disinclined to a flirtation than Rosalie herself when she could find anyone to flirt with her."

Many discreet and single-minded damsels who had suffered at the expense of Miss Meadows now took this occasion of condoling with her on the shameful manner in which Mr. Vining was conducting himself, and nearly drove our pretty little coquette frantic with these additional doses of worm-wood in her cup of bitterness. But she kept up a brave show of indifference, while she devoutly prayed for the close of this most painful day she had ever experienced.

"He must come back to me," she thought, "and if he loves me still I will never, never try him like this again."

But Vining showed no disposition to go back to his former love—not even when she announced her intention of being driven home when the picnic broke up, because she was too tired to ride. Christine drove back with Howard Vining, and Rosalie, furious with jealousy and anger, haughtily refused all other offers to drive her home, and again galloped off with Frank Newton, heading the party on its return to Meadowville.

Vining did not call on his betrothed that evening, and she spent the weary hours in her own room anxiously awaiting the expected summons to meet him in the parlour, when she resolved she would apologize for her unpardonable behaviour and be reinstated in his favour again at any cost.

But ten o'clock came, and no Vining; and Rosalie expiated her error of the day by a night of miserable tears, wounded vanity and self-upbraidings. Vining did not come the next day; and Rosalie learned—of course—that he had called on Christine, and had spent a most charming evening. The next passed in like manner, and a rumour reached her that Christine had consented to forego her prejudice against riding so far as to promise her company to Mr. Vining on the following day.

Rosalie could bear no more. She dispatched a meek little note to her lover, tenderly upbraiding him for his neglect, and telling him she had been ill ever since he saw her last.

Vining was melted, and kissed the little perfumed note a dozen times.

"The dear little thing!" he murmured. "But I hate a coquette; and nothing on earth would tempt me to become the husband of a heartless flirt."

Within an hour Vining was with Rosalie, and a very few minutes sufficed to restore harmony between them.

"It isn't true that you are going to take Christine Allan riding to-morrow, Howard, is it?" asked Rosalie, when Vining arose to leave her.

"Yes, it is true, Rosie—because I have made an engagement to do so."

"And you intend to keep it?" asked Rosalie, with an ominous flash of her gray eyes.

"My child, I always keep an engagement—unless the other party should choose to break it."

"Then I suppose you can have no objection to my going to ride with Frank Newton?" asked Rosalie, haughtily.

"No—under the circumstances, as your own willfulness has been the cause of my not being able to accompany you myself."

"Thank you!" said Rosalie, mockingly. "You are too kind, sir; but I shall not accept your generous permission. I shall not be of the riding party at all."

"Well, that would perhaps be best," said Vining, in a tone of calm reflection. "I think I should prefer it to, Rosa." And then he clasped the little hand close, kissed her lightly on the brow and was gone.

"How easily he takes it all," thought Rosalie,

bitterly; and tears of mortification came into her eyes. "I don't believe he hardly loves me after all, and I adore him. Oh, me! I am punished enough for all my cruelty to others."

Rosalie wept a little, and thoughts that were far from soothing kept chasing themselves through her tormented little mind.

"Does he love Christine?" she asked herself again and again, and then with a sharp twinge of jealousy she answered the thought:

"Yes, he does love her; and that so well that he cannot disguise it. No wonder he prays that I should not be of the party, but I shall go—I shall!"

Accordingly, Rosalie was on her mettle again; and the flirtation between herself and Mr. Newton was renewed with redoubled vigour.

The day ended as the picnic had ended for Rosalie; but this time she would not humble herself to send for her lover.

"No," she said. "He loves Christine Allan—I will not stoop to win him back. Let him go, if my heart breaks."

But Rosalie was far less brave than her words. Accident brought about a reconciliation between herself and Mr. Vining; and while she blessed the fortunate circumstance she resorted to every artifice of beauty, fascination, and love to rivet anew her chains about her lover.

But to her horror she found that she had lost all her old power over him.

He paid her every attention that courtesy and their relation to each other could demand, but the cool indifference of his manner stung her to the soul. She resorted to flirtation again to awaken his former love; but from the beginning that had been a failure, and each successive attempt only proved how utterly unavailing it was in this case.

"I will release him!" said Rosalie, at last, in despair. "I shall know the worst then; and nothing can be worse than this torture."

She wrote a formal note, begging an interview; and when Vining came, as he did, in answer to the note, his betrothed formally released him from all his vows to her.

"You are free," she said, in conclusion, "and you have my sincere wishes for your happiness."

"I have only to beg that you will always remember that this was your own act, Miss Meadows," said Vining.

"But your own earnest wish," she answered, with a bitterness she could not conceal.

"I will not be so ungracious as to contradict you," he answered; and left her with a slight bow and a careless adieu.

Rosalie fell right down where he left her; and though she did not faint she lay there in a heap upon the floor, for a time that seemed to her as months or years when she thought of it afterwards. At last she arose and crawled away, with drooping head, like some wounded animal, to hide herself in the solitude of her own room.

The gossips of Meadowville exulted finely, when the news of Rosalie's defeat became noised abroad; but no one, not even her own father, ever dared to speak to her on the subject.

She came forth from her room the next day, a changed girl—a girl, indeed, no more—but a woman with a pale face, that always remained at the same time young and old, fair and smooth to the last, but aged under the burden of a grief that never lightened.

Vining married Christine Allan; and carried his handsome and brilliant wife back to London with him.

But Rosalie Meadows never married. She joined the Church, and was called a most devout member; she spent her money on charities, and her time among the poor and wretched; and she wore black from the time of her parting with Howard Vining till the hour of her death.

E. C.

VIRGINIA.

CHAPTER XLIV.

AFTER pondering these things over in her mind hour after hour Cora prepared to dress for the evening, when Clarence Brooks had promised to come. The dinner hour had long since passed, and it was getting dusk. Hail came rattling against the window, and a mournful sound of dead leaves arose from the grounds carried off by the wind, which seemed to wail over them. All this made her shudder. She rang the bell and ordered a cup of tea. That might restore her brilliancy—brilliancy! She felt a thousand years old! Would a feeling of true youthfulness ever come back to her?

A mirror was opposite her seat, swinging between two gilded figures that seemed to hold it in its place with their hands. Did the thoughts which

shook her so belong to that beautiful girl, with all her rich hair loosened into negligent disorder, and the weary young face resting on that small hand which the waves of hair half concealed? How delicate and pale and wild-eyed the girl in the glass looked.

There was something weird about her which a man like Mr. Brooks would shrink from. Yes, a cup of strong tea would change all that; if not there was plenty of champagne in the cellar, and that always invigorated her.

A dress of purple silk hung in a wardrobe in the next room. She would wear that—nothing should induce her to put on black for that one evening. Everything outdoors and in was gleamy enough without that. This purple dress had the bloom of a ripe plum rippling over it in waves.

She would wear some delicate lace about her neck and run a white ribbon through the folds of her hair with a blush-rose in the knot.

He might think it strange, but she was weary of presenting herself before him in black.

It is wonderful how soon the thoughts of a young person can be diverted from all sources of annoyance by pretty trifles of the toilet. Even a woman like this gives way to such weaknesses as readily as the innocent of heart.

"I will think of him no more," she said, pushing back her hair with both hands; "sufficient to the day is the evil thereof." When the time comes for action I will act. I shall find myself sufficient for the occasion when it arrives. After making myself mistress here, unquestioned almost, there is little that I need despair of doing."

With these thoughts floating in her mind, she folded her arms in her shawl, fell back against the cushions of her seat, and was soon in a profound slumber.

A servant came up with some tea on a waiter, but seeing her position went away again, walking on tiptoe.

Clarence Brooks came later in the evening and found Cora radiant. The purple dress seemed rippling with chain lightning as she passed under the chandeliers, the sparkle of champagne was in her eyes, the glow of almond flowers suffused her cheeks.

Mr. Brooks had never seen her in colours before, at least by gas-light. She was indeed a creature of rare beauty.

"I need not ask if you are still suffering—never did I see an appearance of health more perfect," he said, taking the hand she held out.

She drew him towards the couch, where the cushions he had brought for her still lay in confusion.

"Sit down," she said, seating herself in an easy chair close by the couch.

"What a strange girl you are! Why, this morning I really thought you would be ill."

"No," she said, leaning her arm on the head of the couch and dropping her hand carelessly downwards till the fingers touched his hair; "my sympathies are troublesome enough, but in your case they shall not make me ill."

"You felt for me, then, in my bitter disappointment regarding this man?"

"Felt for you! Did I seem to feel? But we must not talk of it. I am resolved that nothing sad or grievous shall come between us to-night. Every thought given to this miserable person is a jewel thrown away."

He felt her breath floating over his face. This man was not very much better or worse than other men; all this had its effect upon him.

The night was stormy and disagreeable; hail was beating upon the marble of the colonnade, and gushes of rain swept across the windows. The contrast with all the warmth and silken elegance within, full of comfort as it was, made itself keenly felt.

That white hand dropped lightly—he kissed it; instantly the colour came to his face, he started up from his lounging position and begged her pardon with great earnestness.

She smiled sweetly, looked down upon the flush of red his lips had left on the whiteness of her hand, and pressed her own lips upon it.

"This is how I forgive you," she said.

He looked at her a moment and then sat down suddenly as if electrified.

"Have I shocked you with the punishment?" she questioned, shrinking back timidly. "Do you think the worse of me for that?"

"Think the worse of you—heavens, no! Why ask this question?"

"You looked so serious."

"Would you have me look triumphant?"

"I—I have been very much to blame."

Tears rested upon her eyelashes. She was really distressed. He saw this, and strove with delicate chivalry to reassure her.

"Does the daughter of Amos Lander regret that she has been kind to his friend? Does she fear that she will presume upon it?"

"She fears nothing on this earth so much as losing the good opinion," she said, in a soft, low voice.

"That she never can. It is too firmly rooted. Why you are trembling, dear child!"

"Am I?—not much—it is very foolish. Will you have some music—some battle-piece to harmonize with the storm?"

"No; let the tempest without take its own way. We will have nothing that is not sweet and pathetic. Shall I open the piano?"

"No; I will bring my guitar."

"She went out of the room, ran upstairs, and came down again with the guitar in her hand."

"I must have a low seat," she said, drawing an ottoman close to the head of his couch and sitting down upon it like a bird of paradise. Her purple dress extended far upon the carpet; the rose in her hair sent its perfume across her auditor's lips. There was no need in trying to resist the charm of her presence; he gave away hisself, especially as she did nothing to challenge admiration, but sat with downcast eyes and a sweet seriousness of demeanour, tuning her guitar.

She played a slow, tender little air at first, and after awhile joined in with her voice, which was sweet and sympathetic without being powerful. There was no attempt at anything superior. She played and sang naturally, but with such feeling that Mr. Brooks felt tears stealing into his eyes.

"This is too sad," the guitar is best for lively airs," she said, lifting her humid eyes to his, questioning him with them rather than with her voice.

"Not yet; do not make the transition too abrupt; the charm would be broken. What a sweet plaintive voice you have."

She answered him with a grateful look. The desire to please him was so intense that it absolutely made the haughty creature humble as a little child. And this feminine spirit been upon her from the first; the struggle that had been going on in the heart of Clarence Brooks would probably never have existed. But as it may, for the time he yielded unresistingly to the sympathetic feeling which her gentleness and grace excited, and listened to her music with half-closed eyes, doubting if he really knew his own heart, and whether he had not done grave injustice to the lovely creature at his feet.

Cora was not unimportant. From under those fringed eyelids she cast many a look at the noble face, which the low light shone upon so fitfully, and felt that her hour of triumph was fast approaching. What would she do with it? Of what avail the conquest she was almost sure of?

Was she not that other man's wife? "No, no, no, a thousand times no!" she said in her heart. He had committed a gross fraud in marrying her. Had made himself amenable to the law, degraded himself for ever. She had been infatuated, insane, but not in love with him. All that was a delusion. How could it have been love when she hated him so now?—this new feeling was so different.

This new feeling! Alas, alas, had it come to that? Yes, the haughty creature had found its master passion when all was too late. She would not believe it, but hoped yet to wrest happiness out of the future, reasoning, as weak and wicked women will, that the one great fault in her husband absolved her from all the obligations of her marriage vow—obligations that the world should never know. This woman, in the grandeur and noble passion, as she deemed it, which possessed her now, found excuses for treachery, injustice, and even crime. Had he not deserved all this? Was Alfred Seymour worthy of a moment's consideration? How had he dealt with her?

Heavily as she had dealt with him in her rash, passionate selfishness—if she could only have seen it. But vanity and arrogance would not permit her to look clearly at her own conduct.

It was singular that, in the intense scene that she really felt for her husband's crime, her own more steady offence never once presented itself as far out-reaching his. She was a puritan in that house; an impostor; a woman who made her beauty the accessory of a fraud whose least crime had been greater than his, because unpunished of; yet she dared to arraign and despise him.

She was sincere in all this; her crime seemed only the action of great ability—the proof of an intellect born to control circumstances. The woman almost turned her fraud into poetry, and gloried in the genius that carried it out. She was thinking over these things as that soft music flowed from her lips.

CHAPTER XLV.

On the next day the picnic in the woods came off, and a pleasant affair it was. The brook, that filled

the ravine with its music, took its source from a spring that came from a ledge of rocks, high upon a slope of hills, at the back of the Lander grounds. This ledge was one broad table of granite, shelving inward some ten feet, where a shelf of stone shot out, cleft by a fissure from the upper rock, and, from that long opening, in the stone the spring leaped forth and poured over the granite shelf in one transparent sheet of crystal.

These bright waters were gathered below the ledge into one of the loveliest little rocky pools you ever set eyes on. Soft sand, with pebbles white as snow, gleamed up from the bottom, and jagged points of rock held it in, covered with that delicate moss which finds its highest green in the crystal of ever-falling water drops.

Here the sheltering banks and over-hanging trees had kept away the frost, and the pool was bordered with tall ferns, spear-like rushes and broad-leaved water-plants, turning red about the edges. Some lily pods, too, floated like sheeted emeralds on the water, and the ledge above the little cataract was fringed with maiden-hair, and other rock-clinging plants, which sent their trailing vines now and then to the very edge of the waters, rippling them into ridges of silver as they prepared for a plunge into the pool.

A perfect bower of hemlocks, pines and feathery larches bent over and twined themselves about this ledge, so completely closing it in on all sides, except the one which opened upon the ravine, that twenty people might have taken shelter there undiscovered.

Into this delicious retreat Clarence Brooks came with the two girls who had so often been his companions of late, after a long ramble through the woods. There really was no tiring youth out in a day like this, for the sky overhead was as blue as blue could be, and the clear, silvery sunshine gave it a luminous softness never witnessed in the intense summer time, when out-door excursions are most in vogue.

They came up to the ledge, and sat down on its brink, very cheerful and happy, but rather restless than usual. The truth was, Clarence Brooks had lost a good deal of his playful self-possession since that first day under the chestnut-tree. Many things had troubled him, and for some days a struggle had gone on in his life which no one dreamed of but himself. It was over now and his resolution taken. But he was anxious, and so grave that Ellen, who had won a high place in his esteem, asked him more than once what it was that made him so serious. He answered with some light evasion, but soon fell into his quiet mood again.

He was thinking of a downcast face drooping with feminine modesty over a guitar, which uttered its sweet complaints under a hand that had half-challenged, half repelled his kiss. He was thinking, more seriously yet, of the dear old friend whose most sacred wishes he was about to sacrifice. Was it right? Was it generous? Did the girl really love him, as every look and word that evening seemed to imply?

He remembered the look, so full of gentle loveliness, which she had lifted to his face at parting—the pressure of her hand, which had nestled itself like a bird into his. He remembered, too, how wistfully she had gazed after him when he went out into the stream. He could see her yet, standing in the French window, purpling the golden light behind her like a cloud, the masses of ruddy hair sweeping back from her head, bent slightly forward as it seemed into the darkness. Why would this picture haunt him so? On that day, too, when he had determined on a step which should have driven all such thoughts from his mind.

These reflections possessed him as he waited for the girls under the chestnut-tree and amused himself with flinging clusters of the open buds into the brook, which bore them onward as if the rough things were a burden. He could not shake these thoughts off even after those young creatures came, looking bright as flowers and happy as birds. The spirit of Amos Lander seemed to reproach him for the purpose that lay in his heart.

This was the reason of the seriousness for which Ellen half rebuked him. He threw it off with the vigour of a strong mind giving itself up to an honest idea and became himself again as they came out upon the ledge. Here some moss-cushioned stones had been rolled into place, forming seats around a broad, flat stone, which had fallen from the embankment above, and answered capitably for a table.

"Under that broad hemlock branch which droops so close to the ground you will find a basket with many things which belong to housekeeping," said Mr. Brooks, looking around well pleased.

The girls laughed, and began to loop their dresses high up over their snowy skirts, and roll their sleeves up from their white arms ready for work.

That broad hemlock branch, which spread itself along the earth like a carpet, concealed a world of

choice articles. First came a basket, which gave out a warning rattle of china striking against silver or steel, all hidden under a table-cloth and a pile of dinner napkins.

This was soon disposed of, and directly that great flat stone loomed up from the centre of the ledge, like a snow-drift, the girls were busy as bees laying plates, arranging knives and forks, opening little jars of jelly and pickles, unrolling biscuits and discovering little pots of butter stamped with tiny birds, and all sorts of dainties that were constantly taking them by surprise and bringing forth exclamations of delight.

"Wouldn't it be delicious to spend one's life so," said Virginia, pressing her hands softly together. "I wonder if we shall ever be so happy again!"

"Who knows?" Ellen answered, smiling in her usual quiet way, which was at all times a little sad. "But why not? Nature is the only thing in creation that eternally renews itself. So long as the world lasts she will prove the same."

"Why, how gravely you talk, Ellen! It is not nature alone which makes everything so pleasant. These woods are gloomy enough with their rich leaves all turning brown as dust, if a weary heart goes with them. You remember the first day we came here, how grandly all the foliage was coloured, how warm and bright the sunshine was. Yet we were very sad."

Ellen looked up with a bright smile in her eyes. "What is it then that makes the change?" she asked.

A vivid blush arose to Virginia's face; she looked away, far down a vista of the wood, and answered softly that she was sure she did not know. Then Ellen dropped her eyes and sighed very faintly. This love was a mournful study for her, poor thing. She might witness it, feel it, dream of it, but who was ever known to love a girl deformed as she was? Who could understand the true, warm heart and great brain fettered to a form like that?

No wonder Ellen sighed and longed to go away into the woods and sit alone when the happy face of her mistress brought reflections like these into her mind. But why did the heart in her bosom grow heavier and heavier day by day? Heaven help the girl! Did she too love the man who had come so strangely across them? or was it only the yearning of her woman's nature for a little of that affection which she saw lavished upon others?

Brooks went down to the little cataract, and, from under the broad leaves of some water-plant that grew among the ferns, brought forth a basket of grapes and delicate apples, with a long-necked bottle, capped with tin-foil. The spring water had acted like ice upon them, and the first rare bloom lay on the grapes like frost.

Cora had sent a quantity of cut flowers from the green-house that morning, and Brooks had garlanded the basket with them, after his own taste, mingling the scent of roses with the rich odour of the grapes. Perhaps Cora might not have liked this had she known it, but the party on the ledge considered that basket as the crowning glory of the feast.

That was a delicious meal; sharp appetites, the clear autumnal sunshine and soft air made it perfect. Three children at play in the woods could not have enjoyed themselves more naturally. Even Ellen Nolan came out in force and astonished them with her rare flashes of wit. Brooks was beginning to think a great deal of Ellen Nolan—there was something so fresh and sincere about her. Then the bright things that fell from her lips were coupled with words of absolute wisdom, such as only can come from keen observation and deep thinking. Sometimes the little creature positively startled him with her sayings.

After the feast was over and all its fragments packed away except the basket of fruit, which they carried off into the deeper shadows of the rock, Ellen stole off alone, and, letting herself down to the edge of the pool on which the sunshine gleamed bright as quicksilver, began throwing leaves and fragments of wood into the water, giving herself up to gentle thoughtfulness. She had got into her ideal world, and was fashioning a romance out in her mind, smiling or frowning to herself as the scenes she imagined pleased her.

The other two had found a seat far back on the ledge, sheltered by the broad boughs of a hemlock that curved over them like a tent. Some conversation had already passed between them, for Brooks was speaking earnestly.

"If you can love me, Virginia, as I love you with all my heart, soul and strength, say it to me in words. I must feel the assurance thoroughly before the exactions of this heart will be satisfied. These blushes are sweet, dear child, and I love to feel your form trembling against my arm. But my love craves something more. Tell it me in words, darling. Can you love me?"

"I do—I do!"

She clasped her hands in her lap and lifted them up as a child does in prayer. Her eyes sought his and fell again, but half veiling the light that filled them; then her face fell forward, and she burst into a passion of tears.

He drew her close to his bosom and kissed her for the first time in his life, gently, as a mother kisses her first infant, almost doubting if it yet belongs to her.

Then they sat together in silence, or only uttered such broken words as great joy uses to express itself in. After a time she withdrew herself gently from his arms and said, with a little anxiety:

"I have no property. You will marry a penniless girl."

"So much the better. I would far rather have it so than join poor Lander's vast wealth to my own. We shall not need it, dear child. I have enough."

"And you have chosen me, knowing how more than penniless I am?"

"I have chosen you with all my heart and soul, thinking and caring nothing for the rest. It was your uncle's wish that I should marry his child."

"His wish! Indeed—indeed!"

Virginia was greatly excited. It seemed as if that moment her father was close to them.

"And he wished it—he wished it. His blessing reaches me in spite of all."

Brooks remembered the vague distrust in Lander's letter, and applied this speech to that.

"If the departed really do know what passes here, my child, Lander has read your heart with a juster knowledge than he had of it on earth. Do not let it grieve you that great affection for his daughter blinded him a little."

"No, no, he never was unjust. He was good, wise, generous—the best man, I do think, that ever lived. You did not half know him, Mr. Brooks."

"He certainly did not know you."

"Indeed—indeed he loved me dearly; I cannot talk of it now, the subject is too sad; but some time, when I can have the power—when we are away from this place—I will tell you everything—you will believe me—I know that you will."

"Believe you—yes!"

Then he drew her close to his heart again and soothed the agitation that seemed to have driven all the joy from her.

It was a full hour before Ellen came up to the lodge again, but the lovers felt her presence as an intrusion, and would not believe it when she told them that the sun was almost setting.

They went down the ravine almost in silence, and parted under the old chestnut. A few whispered words passed between the lovers, and he kissed the little hand she gave him while Ellen was looking over the side of the bridge to see if the ferns were all dead.

When the two girls reached Virginia's room Ellen found herself all at once held in a close embrace.

"My friend, my friend, thank heaven with me. It is for myself—my own, own self—that he loves me. Had I guessed my father's wealth there might have been a doubt. Now there is none. Oh, Ellen, how can I make you as happy as the last hour has made me? Child, child, tell me is it all real? Does it take you by surprise? Did you think for a moment that he loved me like that when we saw them riding out so gaily, morning after morning? Tell me the truth, Ellen, did you not think it was her he loved?"

"No, dear lady, I felt from the beginning that it was you."

"But I never should have met him so—why did you not tell me? It was like putting myself in his way."

"As he did not seem to feel that an impropriety we need not grieve over it."

"Grieve! Why, Ellen, it seems to me as if there was so much thing as grief in the world. She has my father's wealth, child, but, oh! how much richer I am than that can make her!"

"Did you tell him the truth, lady?"

"What about the property? No; it will be time enough by-and-by, when we have nothing pleasanter to talk about. But you look grave—troubled. What is the matter, Ellen?"

"Nothing, lady; I am a little thoughtful, that is all."

"No, Ellen, there is something more than that."

"Does Mr. Brooks intend to tell your cousin of this?"

"Perhaps so. Why should he wish to conceal it?"

"Lady, I think Mrs. Lander loves Mr. Brooks herself."

"Ellen?"

"It is the common talk of the house. But that is nothing; I have watched her closely, and have watched him too."

"Well, Ellen?"

"She is a girl of subtle power."

"I know that well, but what then?"

"She loves this man, and love with her will be stronger than ambition. If she knows of this engagement evil will come of it."

Virginia turned deadly white.

"What could she do?"

"How can an honourable person tell what an unscrupulous one will do to accomplish a purpose?"

"Ellen! Ellen! you have hurt me! My heart was so light, and now it feels like marble. How can I protect myself from this girl?"

"Keep your engagement a profound secret."

"But how can I?"

"Easily enough. There is the old way of meeting every morning, if you like. For some cause, she never goes in that direction now. That cause will probably still keep her away."

"But he will see her in the morning; for some reason, he seems anxious to inform her and have everything settled. They are to ride out to-morrow, and he will tell her then."

"Write him a note—ask him to delay it."

"No, Ellen, I cannot do that without giving a reason. Besides, what have I to fear? He will protect me. His love is enough for me to shelter under. Let us think no more of it; your great affection for me makes you over cautious, my friend."

"It may be so," Ellen said; "at any rate we must not make ourselves miserable with doubts. I have made you look serious."

"Yes, a little; I cannot help it. Yesterday I had nothing more to lose; now I have nothing to gain. In his love, heaven has given me back everything."

"And if she deprives you of that?"

"Don't, Ellen; I cannot think of it. That would be death."

"Do you love him so entirely?"

"Yes, Ellen. I would not have told you so yesterday, because I did not know. I thought perhaps that it was hor, and was ashamed of the feeling that is my glory and blessing now. Like the poor Spartan boy, I should have let my heart be torn in silence, and even you would never have guessed. But now I need not blush, though blushes will come in spite of one from such feelings, just as perfume steals from a lily. But I need not blush with shame, at any rate, when you ask me this question. Yes, Ellen, I love him better than anything in the world; to me there is but one man on earth. But I am extravagant—words sound coarsely here. Yes, Ellen, I love him; language can express no more."

"Then, heaven make you happy," said Ellen, solemnly. "Guarded by its love and this other love, all must be well."

Virginia and Ellen usually took tea in their own room when Cora was at home. Indeed, at such times they seldom appeared in the lower part of the house at all. Eunice had entered into this arrangement, and, as neither Mrs. Lander nor Cora made objections, their isolation from the family had become almost complete. That evening they ate very little; Virginia, spite of the doubts that had been forced upon her, was far too happy for any thought of refreshment, and Ellen had evidently something on her mind which made her very serious. She went out with Eunice when she took away the tray, whispering good-night to the happy young creature, whose greatest wish was to be alone with her memory and her dreams.

CHAPTER XLVI.

ELLEN NOLAN was prompt, both in action and thought. Virginia, in the full security of a first passion, believed herself safe in the shelter of her lover's strength, but with a presage of evil which sprang from her own quick intelligence, and would not be shaken off, her friend resolved to meet the question herself. Putting on her black bonnet and shawl, she left the house, and, following the railway, soon reached the little hotel where Clarence Brooks found a temporary home.

Some men belonging to the station sat in front of the house. To avoid them Ellen passed down on the opposite side, keeping in the shadow, crossed the road at the bridge, and came in sight of the little porch to which the sitting-room Clarence Brooks occupied opened. She drew nearer, saw him walking to and fro in the parlour, and, running lightly up the steps, knocked with her finger against the semi-door.

Brooks saw her through the glass, and opened the door at once, wondering what could have brought her there.

"I have come," said Ellen, breathing hard, for she had walked rapidly; "I have come to ask a favour of you, Mr. Brooks."

"There is nothing on earth that I will not grant you, Miss Ellen," he said, cordially; "but first sit down and let me offer you a glass of wine."

Ellen took the wine and drank it. She was a

brave little creature, ready to go any lengths in a good cause, but nature had left her feeble, and at times she felt this a great drawback to her exertions. "Mr. Brooks, my young mistress has told me of—of—"

"She has told you that I love her, and hope to make her my wife. I suppose there is no secret in that, so you need not hesitate."

"That is what I have come to ask, Mr. Brooks. Will you let it be a secret?"

"Did you come from her? Does the lady wish it?" he questioned, in some surprise.

"No, I asked her permission; rather I urged her to make the request, but she declined."

"Then why do you ask it?"

"I cannot explain, Mr. Brooks, and you would not understand me if I did. But I ask this favour of you nevertheless, believing that your happiness and the welfare of Miss Lander depend on it."

"Miss Ellen, you surprise me a little. I have never known any good arise from a secret yet."

"Indeed!" answered Ellen. "What has this whole attachment sprung from but a succession of secret meetings?"

Brooks laughed. He rather enjoyed the sharp wit of Virginia's friend, and trusted her integrity entirely.

"But there was a reason for that."

"What was it, pray, only that it was impossible to receive you at the house, without giving offence to her cousin?"

"Well, that was reason enough, but I do not fear to give offence when my honour requires it."

"But Miss Cora Lander has no right to your confidence. She is not her cousin's guardian."

"True; but Miss Virginia has a mother."

"Oh, Mr. Brooks, I implore you, let this thing rest a secret, as it has hitherto done. Mrs. Lander is a weak, selfish woman, in every way under the control of Cora. She would only do mischief. Believe me when I solemnly tell you that the secrecy I ask is both honourable and wise."

"But it must be made known. I really would be glad to oblige you, Miss Ellen, but there are reasons why Miss Cora Lander should be informed of my engagement with her cousin at the earliest moment."

"I understand the reasons, Mr. Brooks."

"You!"

"Yes; and that is one reason for my coming here to-night. This much I may say. Miss Virginia has been cruelly treated by her cousin."

"About property?"

"In every way. She dislikes her—hates her would be nearer the truth. When she learns that her own hopes or fancies—call them as you like—have been thwarted—in secrecy too—by the person she has so wronged, her resentment will be terrible."

"We shall not fear it," said Mr. Brooks.

"But you will feel it."

"Miss Ellen, I think you are a little hard on Miss Cora Lander. She never has spoken a word to me about your lady that has not been more than kind."

"Oh, sir, do not believe in that! It is a part of her character."

"Hush—hush! Remember this lady is the daughter of my old friend. There has been some disagreement, I know, between the cousins. Such things are common enough when great estates are settled, but they all come right in the end; at any rate, in this case they are of no importance. I never wanted any of Amos Lander's property, and, thank heaven, do not want it now."

Ellen arose to go, sorrowful and disheartened.

"I thought it best to come," she said. "Knowing the truth myself, I hoped you would believe it; but I have only done mischief—heaven forgive me!"

"Don't look so sorrowful, child. At the worst you have done no harm. How earnest you are about this strange request."

"But you will not grant it!" she said, looking wistfully into his face.

"I would, child, but that I think it wrong to pass in the household of my old friend as a free man when I am absolutely engaged to a lady under a roof that was once his. It seems like social treachery."

"Mr. Brooks, believe me, I entreat, when I say that neither in honour nor courtesy are you bound to reveal your real position to either of these ladies. Had Miss Virginia thought so she would never have accepted you unconditionally as she has done. Do you hold her sense of honour as less delicate than your own?"

There was something peremptory and yet so respectful in this speech that Brooks, in spite of himself, was impressed by it.

"Well—well, I will think the matter over, and speak with your lady about it. We shall meet to-morrow. Be sure and take your usual walk."

Ellen took his hand, tears arose to her eyes, and



[CLARENCE BROOKS DECLARES HIS LOVE FOR VIRGINIA.]

brightened them into absolute beauty. He wondered that her face had never impressed him so before.

"Oh, if you would only believe in me!" she said.

"I do, child. It is impossible to help it."

"You will not speak of this to-morrow, when you ride out with Miss Cora Lander?"

"No. I have promised that."

"Thank you. My young lady is very happy now, and happiness drives all sense of wrong out of the heart. She may not look on this matter as I do, who have plenty of time for cool thought. That is what brought me here to-night; forgive me, if I have done wrong. Good-evening."

Brooks seized his hat, and overtook her on the step. "I will see you safely home," he said; "rough men occasionally hang about the station."

"I would rather go alone," she said, gently; "not by the railway, though that does frighten me a little. But I know the footpath by the brook and will take that; enough moonlight will come through the branches, now so many leaves are fallen, to show the path. I don't want anyone to know that I have been here, so shall be safest alone."

Brooks saw that she was in earnest, therefore let her go, but he stood on the step and watched her little figure till it was lost in the duskiness of the woods.

Ellen walked up the path rapidly, holding her breath with a vague sense of awe, for the noise of the brook and the shivering of withered leaves filled the night with that weird music which makes the silence beyond it so impressive. The moon gave down a fitful light, exaggerating the shadows and throwing fantastic gleams through the half-stripped branches. All at once she stopped and gave out a sharp cry. The figure of a man stood before her in the path, just below the ascent of ground on which the summer-house stood.

At first she thought it was one of those heavy shadows thrown by the body of a tree; but the figure stooped and rose again—a gleam of fire seemed to float upwards with the motion. Then the blue light of a match revealed, for one instant, the handsome face of her brother Brian's benefactor. All was dark again in an instant, except the light from a cigar which the man had evidently just kindled.

Ellen hastened forward, throwing aside a branch that had fallen across her path, so eagerly that it came back with a loud rustling noise, enough to startle anyone desirous of concealment. The branch had touched her face, blinding her for the moment. When she looked for the man again he was gone.

She stood a full minute, looking around in blank amazement, then hurried away, fairly panting for

breath, so frightened that she ran at full speed across the lawn, and sheltered herself in the house.

What was that man doing in a place held sacred to the Lander family? Was he staying at the hotel? Did he know anyone in the neighbourhood, or was it a myth that had startled her into such abject cowardice? No, she had seen the face plainly, for that single instant all its features were apparent; but why had it gleamed upon her so vividly in that place?

The next morning Cora carried out a plan that had been arranging itself in her mind, and went to London. She had engaged to ride with Brooks that day, and the sacrifice which she made in giving up this pleasure was a great one; but a feeling of insecurity troubled her, and she resolved to make her future secure at once. She arose early, took her breakfast alone, and went away by the first morning train, leaving a note of apology for Brooks behind her, which she ordered Joshua to deliver before ten o'clock.

It was wonderful the restraint which that girl's absence removed from the whole household. No sooner did Mrs. Lander learn that she was gone, to be absent some days, perhaps, than her spirits rose far above their usual languid pitch. She refused to have breakfast sent to her room, and took something of the old liberty on herself, by assuming the head of the family table.

Eunice, in high good humour, went up to summon Virginia, carrying Mrs. Lander's compliments with her in place of the usual great silver tray with its elegant china services. Both Virginia and Ellen were glad to accept any change. Indeed the former, in her great happiness, could have refused Eunice nothing, for the woman, in her brusque way, had been very kind to her; so they went down to the breakfast-room smiling, and so cheerful that Mrs. Lander became unusually sociable.

Eunice herself waited at table that morning, and a sense of domesticity prevailed in that well-appointed breakfast-room to which it had been a stranger for many months.

"Now, I tell you what it is, girls, take the bits between your teeth while she's gone, and have a good time of it. Miss Virgie, I want to see you riding on that white pony that's been a spilling in the stable, till our Josh is getting savage about it. So put on your habit after breakfast, and let us see if you can't set a side-saddle as well as other folks. It's a burning shame that you haven't been out afore."

Eunice shook her head. She was always violent, even in her fits of good nature, and spoke now in a

state of apparent indignation about somebody, looking fiercely at Mrs. Lander all the time.

"Dear me, Eunice," said the lady, colouring crimson under the wild glances of those eyes, "it isn't my fault that Virginia hasn't ridden every day of her life. Is it, my dear?"

"It is no one's fault, I fancy," answered Virginia, smiling (the happy girl could not speak without smiles that morning), only I—I don't care much about riding."

"It's no such thing! You know better. But that white animal has to be brought out this very morning, or I'll know the reason why!"

"But, Eunice, I have no habit."

"Wasn't you measured for one in Paris, and wasn't the habits and whips, and them side-saddles all sent over together long afore you started? Trust Anne Lander for that!"

"Eunice—Eunice, how can you?" cried out Mrs. Lander, pale with the sudden shock which that name was sure to produce. "Have you no feeling?"

"I've got a good deal of feeling for her," answered Eunice, who was ready to show fight on any subject then. "She's been lived up here long enough, and you've stood by and seen it done without a whimper. Some folks are afraid to say their souls are their own, but I ain't one of that sort. Come now, Miss Virgie, to please me, let Josh bring out that white critter. He bought it for you."

Virginia's eyes filled with tears. Eunice saw it and drew the back of her bony hand across her own eyes.

"That's right—that's right! I thought his name would do it!" she exclaimed. "The habit is all laid out on your bed, gold buttons and all. There's a soft hat too, with a feather as long as the foot-post. He ordered 'em jest alike, all but the hat and feather. He never made no difference between girl and girl, only as one looked better in a thing than t'other."

A still more vicious look at Mrs. Lander destroyed all that lady's appetite, and with genuine tears in her eyes she besought Virginia to oblige her and take a ride.

The happy girl would have done anything that morning to please even her worst enemy, so she made the promise, at which Mrs. Lander arose from the table and kissed her.

Eunice stood by, smiling grimly at all this with the feeling that she was fast getting up a happy family, which would some time or other be sheltered under her own wings.

(To be continued.)



[DONDINI AGAIN.]

THE SOLITAIRE DIAMOND.

CHAPTER V.

MARGHERITA rose from the table as she spoke, and with Maurizio passed into the sick-room.

The tender mother was carefully arranging the pillows. Benedetto's beautiful eyes were open, following her movements with loving, wistful glances; and when she ended by touching her lips to his forehead, he smiled, a sweet, touchingly gentle expression lingering on his pallid lips.

"You are better, my son," said the yearning voice of motherly devotion.

"Yes," whispered the white lips, "and I am thirsty."

Maurizio sprang forward, and his strong young arm supported the helpless frame, while the cool water was given to the parched mouth.

"I like you so much," whispered Benedetto, his thin fingers clasping Maurizio's hand to detain it. "Your touch is like velvet, and yet so firm and helpful. I wish you would not leave us—I wish you were not going away."

"I am not going," answered Maurizio, his eyes filling with tears. "I love you already so much, mio caro, I cannot tear myself away."

The pale mother, the tears dropping down her cheek, stretched out her hand to him, and Maurizio clasped it warmly.

"You hear, mother beloved, and Margherita, darling, he will not leave us!" exclaimed Benedetto, so earnestly that the whisper strengthened into a clear, audible voice, and a faint glow crept upon either pallid cheek.

"But you must be quiet," said Maurizio, anxiously. "I will be good," answered Benedetto, with a sweet, contented smile, and he closed his eyes, and, still holding his feeble clasp of Maurizio's hand, fell fast asleep.

He rallied from that hour, until in a week he was able to walk with help across the room.

Maurizio by that time had become well acquainted with the family, and had been accepted among them as a valued friend. With all, indeed, but the poor old Uncle Delto, who could not be prevailed upon to come to the table or enter the room while the young man was present.

Maurizio wondered at their patience and forbearance, even tenderness, with his waywardness, and possibly betrayed it in his countenance, for Signora Perragna said, sadly, one day:

"If you knew how much he has suffered, through what fiery trials he has passed with undaunted heroism, what blow it was that broke his noble mind into these sorry fragments, you would agree with us that no dealings can be too gentle and tender on our part."

"It grieves me much that I should be such a source of annoyance to him, and therefore to you," answered Maurizio. "I would go away at once, despite my own reluctance, except for Benedetto's sake."

"No, no. You must not go; you are of wondrous comfort to the precious child," answered she, hastily. "We must find some way to win for you poor Delto's confidence."

"Let me go with him to the arbour; you shall carry some new pencils for drawing. I am sure I shall manage it in some way," said Margherita, eagerly. "And will find some fresh berries for Benedetto besides."

Her mother nodded her approval, and Margherita, bringing forth her flat, wide-brimmed straw hat, tripped forth with a brighter face than Maurizio had seen since his acquaintance with her.

The young Venetian was nothing loth. He had made no examination of the place whatever, for the invalid's constant need of his attention had confined him closely to the house, and the absence of the proprietor of the silk factory had made any early application for the vacant situation of no avail.

His fair companion led the way across the flower-tapestried field, and turned towards a dense grove of noble trees—pausing a moment at the brow of the hill to point out to him amidst the clustering roofs of the populous little town below the tall belfry of the silk factory.

"It is for Uncle Delto's sake, more than anything else, that we remain in this secluded spot," said she. "We tried to live in a pretty little house close by the belfry, so that my brother should be spared such long walks. But poor Uncle Delto grew wild and frightened, and was in such misery we were thankful to get back again. And this, after all, is our own home, and really belongs to us. I am so impatient for him to like you that you may know his peculiar nature—so gentle and yet so fascinating. He is at once so wise and skilful, yet so feeble and helpless. All the children adore him. You should see his playful, winning ways with the little creatures; he has always a welcome for them. But of those who seem like patriots he is terribly afraid. If I can make him understand that you are one of us, that you will labour for your own

support, it will all be ended—all his distrust and uneasiness. But he persists otherwise. He insists that you are nobly born, and came from Venice to hunt him up. And he keeps talking about your hair; as if indeed—here pretty Margherita smiled and blushed—"as if indeed you were to blame that it waves and curls in that way with such golden gleams in it."

Maurizio laughed, and then sighed.

"I will alter it if be my hair which troubles him; in truth it should not be allowed to grow in this fashion, and it shall not when I am at work for Signor Erizzo at the factory. I ought to be able to tell you about myself, whence I come, what I have been. But I have met with trouble, and cannot touch upon it now. Besides, I want to forget it all, to begin a new existence."

"We have no idle curiosity," answered Margherita, with dignity. "Enough that we accept you for a friend. Our pure-minded Benedetto would not cling so to you were there stain of guilt, or element of sinfulness apparent in your character."

"A beneficent Providence indeed sent me to your happy home," responded Maurizio, earnestly.

"Hark; there are children's voices; Uncle Delto has company; let us steal upon them softly, and I can show you a pretty sight. This way, keep in the shade, Signor Maurizio, and tread lightly."

With her dimpled white finger on her rosy lips, Margherita stole on, and, leaving the well-worn, narrow footpath, she threaded her way under close hanging bushes, over mossy stones, until at length she paused, and, laying her hand on Maurizio's shoulder, she drew away a hanging vine, and showed him the promised picture.

Between two stalwart tree trunks an arbour had been improvised, that would not have been scorned in a park. The sides were formed of osiers twisted in a graceful manner—the roof was composed of stout boughs laid thickly together, and having a light soil upon which mosses and delicate ferns had been transplanted; their dainty sprays trailed lovingly down, and made a sylvan fringe of emerald framework to the tableau upon which Maurizio looked with pleased and interested eyes. A rustic table and two benches formed the simple furniture of the arbour—but the table was piled with all sorts of pretty litter. Shells from the ocean far away; cones from the fir-tree; heaps of gay-coloured beads; dead butterflies by the score; a bird's nest, with its eggs within; stuffed birds of life-like appearance; two thick heavy folios of closely written parchment. Maurizio noticed these first of all, and then turned

his eyes towards the old man, who, with a tiny urchin at either knee, was blowing bubbles, shouting as gleefully as either of them, while the crystal globe swelled and swelled, gathering rainbow hues, and picturing the scene with fairy tints.

"Ah, thou thinkest it is beautiful, little Giotti," said the sweetly modulated voice, "and so it is. But wait until thou seest me with—" he paused, dropped his voice to a mysterious whisper. "Some time thou shalt see when all is safe. These will burst, and fly away, like all our beautiful dreams of happiness; but Delto knows how to blow the lovely globes that will stay—stay always, little Giotti. Think of that. Delto will braid the rings and necklaces of the crystal loveliness, which shines like the diamond, and is as transparent as the water. Only he dares not yet. They will know his handiwork, and he must be chary."

"Blow another one, Uncle Delto. Oh, the colours! see me in it, Uncle Delto. And you with your white beard; how white it is. Did you go up to the mountain peaks where the snow lies to make it so white, Uncle Delto?"

"Thou art so impatient, wise little Giotti. Yes, the life blood was frozen in me, and so my hair turned to snow. But that is passed long ago. It was in another land, you know; if there be only no bridge from it to this happy world, I shall be content. But now of those torturing things must come here to disturb me. There, let us put away the bubbles, I am afraid someone sees, and will say it is glass. See now if this be not better than bubbles."

And he heaved up from his table a green leaf curled into a cup, filled with rosy Alpine strawberries.

The children both shouted with delight. And the old man, his face one glow of genial enjoyment, gave out the berries to the little round mouths held up after the fashion of nestled birdlings.

"That is the last, the very last. We'll carry it to a nest I know of, and the mother bird will sing us a song by way of reward."

And Delto rose, held out a hand to each, and was leading the curly-headed rogues away, when Margherita, beckoning for her companion to follow, stepped forth.

"Wait a minute, Uncle Delto," said she, in a tone of authority. "I come to bring you a present from this worthy youth, who is going to take poor Benedetto's place in the factory, and do the sick lad's work for him. Signor Maurizio, Uncle Delto."

The old man had dropped the chubby hands of the children, and turned round with the same sweet infantile smile, but the moment the young man stepped forward he fell back, and stretched out both hands as if toward off his approach.

"Go away, go away!" shrieked he. "I will never tell—never! though you tear me limb from limb."

"I mean no harm to you," exclaimed Maurizio, in his most persuasive tone. "See here are coloured chalks for you to draw with. Will you blow me some of your bubbles?"

"I know nothing about blowing. I tell you I am only poor old Delto. I'm ill. I'm tired. Go away."

He began to tremble, and turned so pale that even Margherita was dismayed.

"You must go out of sight till I can calm him," she whispered, and Maurizio, much dismayed, withdrew, and waited a little distance from the arbour. "It is so strange," murmured Margherita, when at length she joined him. "There is something in your appearance which frightens him. He talks all the time incoherently about your hair, and says you have come to find out something which he can never tell."

She repeated this remark at home. Signora Peruggia sighed heavily.

"I understand," she said. "We can only wait for time to familiarise any poor brother with Signor Maurizio's looks. He bears a strong resemblance to someone who participated in the poor man's terrible past. I saw himself that first day. Let us leave him in peace a little longer, our rashly urge his liking."

CHAPTER VI.

MAURIZIO obtained the situation, and was speedily put into possession of a little desk in the dusty office of the factory. Signor Erizzo's business was in a prosperous condition, and continually increasing. To his own unspeakable delight the young Venetian patrician found that labouring for a livelihood was neither so uninteresting nor humiliating as he had been led to believe. His lively, intelligent mind was keenly interested in the method of weaving the justness fabric, in the busy life of the factory, in the details of business, even in the outside management of the silk-worms and the cultivation of the mulberry-trees.

He had his happy home in the cottage on the hill away from the town, far despite poor old Delto's alarm none of the others of the family could think of sending him away from them.

And very soon he had become endeared to mother and daughter quite as much on his own account as for Benedetto's singular and extravagant predilection in his favour.

The consumptive youth was some days able to walk around the garden with Maurizio on one side and the sweet, unselfish Margherita on the other, ready to lend instantaneous aid. But yet it was evident that he was steadily failing. Indeed the hours spent around his cheerful couch were the most precious to Maurizio of any in the day.

Benedetto was passionately fond of music. His mother and sister were each possessed of a pure silvery voice, and knew how to use it skilfully.

Maurizio's love for him strengthened day by day, and in the sweet satisfaction of his new home he could look back upon the bitter experience and dark memories of Venice without that keen pang which had at first made memory a torture.

Sometimes he found himself drawing comparisons between this peculiarly amiable youth, who was dying slowly, and yet made his bedside a joyous and hallowed spot, and the gay, haughty, imperious Federico, who had first called forth the strong friendship of his nature; and remembering the treacherous desert of the one he turned with unmitigated thanksgiving to the beauty of the unselfish, patient endurance of the other.

The keen sense of wrong and injury which had embittered his mind when he left Venice died out beneath the benignant influence of this new atmosphere. He cared naught now for the forfeited splendours of the Perceolli palace. He had found more enduring happiness than the giddy excitements of pleasure. He could even be thankful for the reverse of fortune which had taken him away from that unnatural, injurious life of self-indulgence and vanity.

He was conscious of a better, truer manliness, when he received his well-earned payment from Signor Erizzo, than that exultation which had swelled within his heart when he stood at the threshold of the grand old Venetian palace, beckoning to his guests and pronounced the world so beautiful. He knew nothing of his own capabilities then. Now they had been tried and not found wanting.

He had anticipated much annoyance from the silk manufacturer, in reference to his name and recommendations, but was agreeably surprised to find the signor was too thankful to discover anyone able to look after his accounts thoroughly to be over-conspicuous.

Indeed, as no money passed through the young man's hands, there was no occasion for close scrutiny. It had troubled Maurizio to give another name than his own, and he was thankful that it somehow happened that everyone addressed him as Signor Maurizio.

For to announce himself as a Perceolli was entirely out of the question. He did not mean that anyone should draw that revelation from him, not even his dear friends at the cottage.

But as the days slipped on into weeks, and the weeks into months, a remembrance of Brigida's parting charge haunted him.

She is right, poor old Brigida! there is danger that I shall forget the palace, and gladly forego my rights. Since I made the promise I must fulfil it. I will find means to send word whither that unwelcome box can be sent, that I may keep it as the only reminder of my true name and position.

He kept his promise, reluctant though he was to receive any communication from Venice to disturb his new-found serenity.

Signora Peruggia never questioned her son's friend concerning his past life, or his family history. But Maurizio was sometimes nervously conscious of her long, searching glance, and a strange look of mingled perplexity and alarm in her eyes, when sometimes he was lost in an abstracted mood.

The poor old lunatic had not yet overcome his distrust and fear of the new inmate of the cottage. He spent most of his time in the arbour, where, as Margherita observed, he was happier than he could be anywhere else, so that Maurizio might spare himself any self-reproach. The day came, however, when even poor Delto's antagonism was overcome.

"I wonder where he is," muttered Benedetto, nervously, as Maurizio took his seat beside him. "That man disturbs us all, but he fairly crazes my gentle, timid Uncle Delto. He hargens out to find him, and I am sure it is time he brought him home."

"Your uncle is in his arbour, I suppose," observed Maurizio; "I will go up and see that there is nothing wrong, but I suppose I must not attempt to bring him back with me."

"Someone else has gone—a visitor of ours, who is none too agreeable to any of us, but who fairly distracts my poor uncle's weak brain. Somehow I always feel as if the dear old man was maltreated. I should really be glad to have you go," answered Benedetto, wiping the damp dew from his forehead.

Maurizio took his hat at once, and went out. He walked swiftly through the field towards the grove, and entering it took the shaded bye-path which Margherita had shown to him, so that he gained the first view of the arbour unseen by its inmates.

He quickened his steps as he heard the poor old man's weak, tremulous voice, pleading, in unmistakable tones of terror, and peering through the bushes, he saw a sight which filled him with indignation.

There was Uncle Delto, with a face of childlike horror and alarm, his hands securely tied, standing with cowering knees and hanging head before a stony-looking but aged man, who held a nail twig in his hand, every now and then applying it vigorously to the white, delicate fingers clasped over Delto's breast, eliciting a little shriek at every blow.

The thin, narrow back was towards him, but something made Maurizio start, and, rubbing his eyes vigorously, he peered forward with intense interest.

"Speak, shepherd! where did you hide them? If you try to think, you can remember," exclaimed a wiry, shaven voice.

Maurizio held his breath nervously.

He was right. It was Giorgio Dondini. What was he doing here? Had he come to destroy his new-found peace, to haunt him, or was he in some inexplicable way connected with these new friends, who had become so dear to him?

Maurizio crouched behind the bushes, but watched closely.

"No, no. I know nothing. Let me go, let me go," whimpered poor old Delto.

"Obstinate mule! I tell you it will revenge all your wrongs. Think where you put them."

"I have no wrongs here. It was in the other place—the one I left. Why do you come from it to torment me? And I was happy, so happy," wept Delto, yielding, like a child, to this show of authority from a man many years older than himself.

"You shall remember! There now, try to think. I shall strike harder next time."

He struck the stinging switch smartly over the bound hands, repeating, sternly:

"Make haste to think. Tell me where you hid the treasure. I will find a bigger stick. I will tear the flesh the next time I strike," said Giorgio Dondini, assuming a fierce demeanour, that made the poor victim cower like a frightened dog. "I know you can think if you try. See, I will leave you bound here while I fetch a larger stick. If you have thought and are ready to tell when I come back, I will cut the cords and let you go."

While he spoke he knotted a stout cord around Delto's waist, and fastened it to the arbour. This done, he walked with tantalizing slowness down the path. The moment, however, he was lost to view, Maurizio, knife in hand, sprang to the rescue. He cut the bonds hastily, seized the old man's hands, and led him swiftly towards the bye-path.

"Don't be afraid, Uncle Delto," said he, soothingly, while he hurried his faltering limbs as swiftly as possible. "I will take you away from him."

Delto's scared eyes gradually cleared.

"Good, good!" said he. "Delto never'll be afraid of you again. The whip hurts. Delto mustn't tell. Hush, hush! don't you know an angel is listening to see if I keep my promise? Delto knows, but Delto never'll tell, not till he gets to the shining river, and she is there to hear."

Scarcely pausing to understand the meaning of this earnest speech, Maurizio hurried the poor old man to the cottage, and into the presence of the startled family.

"Keep him safe beside you while your visitor is here," said he, abruptly. "Some time I will explain why. As for me, I must hurry back to the town. There is urgent call there for Maurizio Constante, the clerk. I shall hardly be able to return to-night."

He did not wait for any answer, but dashed away. Once safely in a private room of the town inn, the young man dropped his head upon his clasped hands.

"Let me think," he murmured, listlessly. "I am startled, bewildered. There is a meaning surely in all this, but I cannot catch the clue. This old man, Delto—who is he? What is it which he can tell, and Giorgio Dondini is so anxious to know? Great heavens, I remember old Brigida's declaration that Giorgio Dondini was always waiting for some one; who then are these people? Benedetto—ah, the name! Margherita, and the mother with her smooth face but her gray locks! Has a guiding Providence sent me

among—But no, they are dead. Brigida said they were dead. It is all confusion. I cannot be sure of anything without some farther clue. I will watch eagerly for the sign of as much as a drifting straw to help me. But of one thing I am resolved. I will no longer deceive them; they shall know my true history.

He sent a little boy the next morning to the cottage on a simple errand, and from him learned that the visitor was still there. Accordingly he remained away the second night, and on the following day he saw for himself, from his office window, the lumbering coach bear off the evil, vindictive face of Giorgio Bonadini.

He received as warm a welcome when he entered the vine-hung door as if he had been away on a long journey. It was very pleasant for the youth to see Margherita's sweet face dimple into glad smiles, and watch Benedetto's pale cheeks flush with eager welcome. He was very thankful, too, when Signora Ferragus held out her hand, and smiled while she said:

"I was not aware before how closely you had crept into our hearts. I missed you myself as much as Benedetto did. You must have been very busy at the factory."

"I thank you all for your kindness," answered Maurizio as he took his seat beside Benedetto's couch. "I would it lay in my power to repay you for the generous free-heartedness which has given a stranger such a home as this. Signora Ferragus, I have been thinking in my absence how selfish and selfish it has been in me to keep you in ignorance of all my antecedents. I am going to make amends now, and tell you my true history."

But the signora's forehead was contracted as if in pain.

"Nay," said she, hastily. "Remember that we also have been silent. I have rejoiced in the thought. Let it still remain so. The past is too full of anguish for me to bear to look upon it. Let us rather accept in simple faith what we see and know of each other, and ask no farther."

"If it be your wish," began Maurizio, hesitatingly, "but I confess I would rather you were acquainted with all my secrets. Besides, I promise to refrain from pressing your confidence."

"Shall I take, and yet refuse to give? No, no! Let us wait. If it is meant for us to learn all, it will happen ere long," returned the signora, in a voice shaken with agitation.

"So be it then," answered Maurizio, but not without keen disappointment. Was he not cut off now from all inquiries concerning their guest? Must not all his vague suspicions return, unexplained, to their starting-point?

Benedetto began eagerly questioning concerning the factory, in whose success he was still keenly interested, and seemed surprised to hear that it was not excess of business which had kept his friend away.

To Maurizio's relief the entrance of Uncle Delto created a diversion of topic and thought. The old man shrank back at the first glimpse of the additional figure in the circle, but the second look, to the surprise of all, brought him forward. He walked over to Maurizio, the pleased, childish smile which the youth had never seen before, irradiating his whole face.

"Kind and good. Delto is not afraid now. Delto will not be whipped again; say with Delto while he goes to the arbour," said he.

The signora flushed scarlet and then turned deadly pale.

"Delto whipped?" said she; "what does it mean? I remember now that you brought him home, and that you charged us to keep him here."

"I found him bound, with your visitor standing over him, whipping him, to make him tell some desired secret."

"Delto didn't tell, Delto didn't," whispered the old man, standing still closer to Maurizio.

"Shameful!" exclaimed the signora, her eyes flashing with anger.

"His explanation now—my poor Delto's alarm at my cousin's appearance, and your look him away from his cruel hands. How can we thank you enough, Maurizio?"

"I cut his cords, and got him off without his persecutor seeing me. In fact, it was to avoid Giorgio Bonadini that I remained away. You must let me say so much."

"You know him?" ejaculated all three, in tones of unfeigned astonishment.

"To my cost," replied Maurizio, bitterly. "If I have an enemy in the world I know it is that man." The signora was looking thoughtfully on the floor.

"We do not like him. We are always thankful when he goes away," said Margherita, eagerly.

"He is a near relative, but I fear that he is a

wicked and vindictive man," sighed the signora. "Nevertheless, he has been a friend in his way. He gave us this home. It is by his help we eke out our simple and yet expensive living. Nothing, however, can excuse his cruelty to poor Delto—nothing."

"Let us talk of something else," said Benedetto, gently, watching the sorrowfulness gathering on his mother's face. "It is a mercy at all events that Uncle Delto has come to know and trust you, Maurizio," whispered Margherita. "Now you shall go to the arbour and see him at his best, and I promise you the feeble, flickering gleams of genius from his broken mind will make you wonder, marvel and respect him for what he must have been when he was sound and well."

"I forgot to give you the basket of fruit, Benedetto, which Signor Erizzo bade me bring you. I left it on the table. There are some wondrously sweet grapes, ripened thus early, forced by his new system of gardening, each one like a sea-tinged pearl, with an opal's touch of fire on every polished globe. There are oranges fresh from the sunniest orchards of Sicily, and figs so plump and rich of hue you will long to taste them the moment your eyes fall upon them."

"Signor Erizzo is very kind," answered Benedetto, languidly. "But much I fear his fine fruit will lack the delicious flavour of the berries you and Margherita hunt up for me in the dear old woods."

"You surely cannot say that of this."

And Maurizio held up a slender fig, glowing with ruby and golden tints wondrously blended, as he held it up to the light, and the sunbeams flashed through it.

"It is of some famous vintage, and has been kept carefully for many years. You shall taste it now."

"I wish it might have the flavour of those slow-trickling drops you gave me at our first meeting, my friend of friends. I wondered faintly then if I were imbibing nectar, there was such a rare aroma, like all rich spices and perfumes blended together in a fairy crucible. What wine was it? I wonder that I have not asked you before."

Maurizio's forehead knit itself into a puzzled frown, ere he replied, musingly:

"I know the vintage. It was a private brand, of great costliness. There are rows of flasks lying now among the cobwebs in the vaults of a house from which I am driven, who was once its master. Money cannot buy one of them, yet I will try to get you one for all that."

"Nay, nay, I spoke thoughtlessly, I had no intention—And now I have pained you; I have stirred up ugly memories. Pardon me, my Maurizio."

"Dear Benedetto, there is naught to pardon. I am too happy here to feel the wounds that would once have bled freshly at every touch. I am healed, cured. I have no ambition beyond keeping your affection here in this peaceful nest."

Margherita was watching him with earnest attention.

"I knew you were not of plebeian birth, Maurizio," said she, softly.

"My fortunes are plebeian; what matter for the rest?" returned the young man. "But there is something else in the basket—a bouquet choice and fine, and who do you guess it is for?"

Benedetto put out his thin hand, and turned his sister's rosy face towards them, while his low, musical laugh gushed forth merrily.

"Look at her, Maurizio! She knows all about it! Pretty chest! She tries to make us think she has no idea. Signor Erizzo is wonderfully kind; of course it is all for me. Oh, of course he has no idea that there is a young maiden in the cottage! And Signor Erizzo has his wife a twelvemonth ago. Just think of that, my Maurizio!"

"Naughty boy!" cried Margherita, her cheek becoming of a still deeper crimson. "You tease me too much, Benedetto."

But Maurizio had suddenly grown cold and listless.

"Signor Erizzo!" It meant this then—all his earnest inquiries about the cottage, his great interest in this charming family. And Signor Erizzo was a wealthy man, an enterprising man—one who would gain respect wherever he went. He was not so very old. He was decidedly the great man of the town. And Margherita blushed.

Poor Maurizio! A veil had been suddenly drawn aside from his heart, and he read its secret for the first time. He did not hear another word of the playful badinage that passed between brother and sister, but sat still, cold, and sad, until Margherita, with a mournful look on her fair face, stole away.

Benedetto's white, frail fingers stealing into Maurizio's aroused him from his trance.

"My friend, what ails thee? What deadly sin has blown over thee that thou lookest so stern

and wretched all at once?" ceased Benedetto's fine, sympathetic voice.

"I am thinking that I must go away from the cottage. I must leave the factory," said Maurizio, in a hard, stern voice. "I must turn out into the cold world again."

"What, and break all our hearts!" ejaculated Benedetto, in utter dismay. "Art thou crazed, Maurizio?"

"Do you think it will cost me nothing?" demanded Maurizio, almost fiercely. "Nevertheless, I must go. How could I think my evil fate had forgotten me? The other blow was nothing to this."

"What blow? I am frightened, Maurizio—you look so stern! Tell your friend what you dread."

And the beautiful white face stole coaxingly to his, till the cold cheek touched his own, and those clear, deep eyes looked earnestly into his.

"Benedetto, best friend of my life! Why should I not show you my heart? Keep silence, however, I pray you, but have pity when you hear, and let me go away. I love Margherita with the deep, strong passion of manhood, which cannot stand calmly and see another win her."

Benedetto's low, glad laugh broke the silence and checked Maurizio's laboured breathing.

"You love her, my Maurizio! So then my fondest dream is fulfilled, my dearest wish granted! And because you love her must you go away?"

"But, Benedetto—Signor Erizzo—" stammered Maurizio.

Benedetto was still laughing softly.

"So ho! Are all lovers so foolish? Here is Maurizio going away, and Margherita blushing like a rose at the name of a suitor whose very presence gives her a shiver. Wait a little, Maurizio, and watch Margherita, when Signor Erizzo comes. It will be worth your while. I've been nearly choked trying to keep down my laughter before now to see the poor man left talking to mother and me, while the pretty bird he came to woo flew off at the first opportunity."

"Do you mean then that Margherita will not marry the signor?" exclaimed Maurizio, his face clearing as if by magic.

"Precisely, my friend Maurizio. At what hour wilt thou depart?"

Maurizio stooped forward and kissed heartily the roguish lips, while he asked:

"Didst thou declare thy wishes were in my behalf, best of friends? Wouldest thou give her to me, the unknown, friendless, obscure stranger?"

The light arms stole around his neck.

"Maurizio—Maurizio, my heart leaped up to thee from the very first! I guessed how it would end. I can die happy, knowing these dear and helpless ones will not need my protection. You will be a son to my mother, the best friend of life to my darling sister. Oh, I am so happy—so happy! Go and find Margherita. Silly child! I'll warrant she's not left off blushing yet. Bring her hither before the glad light has all fled from her eyes after thou hast spoken with her. I tell thee, Maurizio, the lily petal is not fairer, the Alpine snow not purer than that dear girl's gentle nature. Well is she named Margherita—a pearl indeed! Wear it on thy bosom, my Maurizio, and see that its beauty is not marred—its purity never dimmed. Go and my blessing with thee!"

Benedetto's voice faltered, and as he sank back to his pillow he motioned for Maurizio to leave him.

The Venetian youth turned obediently towards the door, his heart thrilling with a new and delicious tremor.

Margherita was nowhere to be seen. But Maurizio saw a bright blossom lying in the pathway towards Uncle Delto's arbour, and suspected that, bouquet in hand, she had followed the old man to his retreat. He followed slowly.

(To be continued.)

A WATERLOO VETERAN.—A man named Stokely is now living at Milborne Port, near Sherborne, in Dorsetshire, who fought at the battle of Waterloo. He is 77 years of age, has had three wives, and ten children by each wife. All the children are alive. Stokely's birthday is the 18th of June, Waterloo day.

BRITISH TROOPS IN CANADA.—Thirteen regiments of British regular troops, making about nine thousand men, are now stationed in Canada. They are distributed as follows: East—in Quebec are the 30th Regiment and the 1st battalion Rifle Brigade; in Montreal (head-quarters) are 1st battalion 25th Regiment, 2nd battalion 23rd Regiment, the 100th Regiment, and 4th battalion Rifle Brigade; at St. John's, part of the Royal Canadian Rifles; at Isle aux Noix, part of the Royal Canadian Rifles; at Chambly, part of the Royal Canadian Rifles. These form outposts, lying as they do on the frontier. West—in Ottawa, half of the 100th Regiment; in Kingston,

part of the Royal Canadian Rifles; in Toronto, 13th Hussars and 2nd battalion 17th Regiment; in London, 58th Regiment, 4th battalion 60th Rifles; in Brentford, 2nd battalion 7th Regiment; in Hamilton, 1st battalion 16th Regiment. At all these posts there are detachments of artillery, and at Montreal one squadron of the 13th Hussars.

SCIENCE.

THE exhaling power is always least in the indigenous trees, the native crab and pear giving less than the cultivated varieties, and the sloe and bullace still less, compared with the Orleans and greengage plum.

DR. RICHARDSON considers iodine as the best chemical agent for destroying organic poisons. Iodine placed in a box covered with muslin will diffuse itself at a temperature of 70 deg. at the rate of a drachm in twenty-four hours. Heat and light favour the destruction of the poisons.

DID the earth possess neither an atmosphere nor seas, and were the temperature of each place to depend entirely on the direct heat of the sun, the difference of the mean annual temperature between the equator and the poles, according to theory, ought to amount to about 200 deg.

THE sixth enormous gun cast at the Fort Pitt Foundry for the Chilean Government has been dispatched, accompanied by 100 balls of 1,000 lb. each. The monster is twenty and a half feet long, twenty inches in the bore, and five and a half feet in diameter at the breech.

ASSUMING an average difference of only three-quarters of an inch of barometric pressure in the northern and southern zones between latitudes 40 deg. and 60 deg., it is estimated that the pressure on the northern zone exceeds the pressure on the southern zone by no less than 14,500,000,000,000 of tons.

THE steamship *Narva*, chartered by the India-rubber, Gutta-percha, and Telegraph Works Company (Limited), left Greenhithe for Havannah, having on board 240 miles of submarine telegraph cable to be laid between Havannah and Key West (Florida), and between Key West and Cape Romano (Coast of Florida), thereby placing the island of Cuba in telegraphic communication with England and the continent of Europe.

M. DUMAS has recently described some very remarkable forms of diamond anthracite of the following composition:—Carbon, 97.6; hydrogen, 0.7; oxygen, 1.7; density, 1.66. The anthracite was in extremely hard polished concreted nodules, capable of scratching glass and other remarkably hard and polished substances, after the manner of the diamond. The nodules were sold by a dealer to Count Douhet, who transferred them to M. Dumas for scientific examination.

AN aquarium is being constructed at Berlin, on the best scientific and financial principles. It is to be on a larger scale than those of London, Paris and Hamburg. Dr. Alfred Brehm, the well-known author of "Illustrated Animal Life" and "Life of Birds," &c., has been placed at the head of the undertaking. The idea was started just when the Luxemburg question seriously threatened the peace of the European states; but in spite of these unfavourable auspices no less than 80,000 thalers were subscribed in the first week. An excellent architect has been engaged and Dr. Brehm is actively corresponding in every quarter of the globe for the acquisition of rare inhabitants for the new aquatic temple.

AN OCEAN OF FIRE.—As the ship sails with a strong breeze through a luminous sea on a dark night the effect produced is then seen to the greatest advantage. The wake of the vessel is one broad sheet of phosphoric matter, so brilliant as to cast a dull pale light over the after part of the ship; the foaming surges, as they gracefully curl on each side of the vessel's prow, are similar to rolling masses of liquid phosphorus; whilst in the distance, even to the horizon, it seems an ocean of fire, and the distant waves breaking, give out a light of inconceivable beauty and brilliancy; in the combination the effect produces sensations of wonder and awe.—*Wanderings of a Naturalist.*

THE ALKALI ACT.—A report presented by Dr. Angus Smith to the Board of Trade on the working of the Alkali Act during the year 1866 shows conclusively to what an extent it is possible to prevent the vitiation of the air of manufacturing districts by noxious gases, and offers the utmost encouragement to the prosecution of farther reforms in this particular direction. Before the passing of the act in question the escape of muriatic-acid gas, so detrimental to vegetable life, and injurious to the health of human beings, was equal to a thousand

tons per week. In 1866, though the number of works has increased, there has been a diminution of escape, as compared with the preceding year, equal to four tons and a half per week, and the average escape is about a seventh of the amount allowed by law; a condition of things that at once shows the necessity for pushing the operation of the Act—which expires in June, 1868, and which in no way interferes with the interests of manufacturers—to its fullest extent, and for demanding its re-enactment, with any improvements that may be dictated by the experience already acquired. If so much good can be so easily effected in the case of alkali works there is no reason why legislation may not purge the atmosphere of our large towns from the pestilential emanations that are allowed to be given off unchecked from manufactories of all kinds, and to tell so sadly upon the health of the population.

EXPERIMENTS ON THE POISON OF THE COBRA.

GEORGE B. HALFORD, M.D., of Melbourne, sends the following remarks on the poison of the cobra-di-capella:

The melancholy accident which so lately happened with the cobra-di-capella induced me to make some experiments and observations upon the action of the reptile's poison, and they have proved so eminently interesting that I am induced to send you an epitome of them. I have to state, then, that when a person is mortally bitten by the cobra-di-capella, molecules of living "germinal" matter are thrown into the blood, and speedily grow into cells, and as rapidly multiply, so that in a few hours millions upon millions are produced at the expense, as far as I can at present see, of the oxygen absorbed into the blood during inspiration; hence the gradual decrease and ultimate extinction of combustion and chemical change in every other part of the body, followed by coldness, sleepiness, insensibility, slow breathing and death. The cells which thus render in so short a time the blood unfit to support life are circular, with a diameter on the average of one seventeen-hundredth of an inch. They contain an early round nucleus of one two-thousand-eight-hundredth of an inch in breadth, which, when further magnified, is seen to contain other still more minute spherules of living "germinal" matter.

In addition to this the application of magenta reveals a minute coloured spot at some part of the circumference of the cell. This, besides its size, distinguishes it from the white pus, or lymph corpuscle. Thus then it would seem that, as the vegetable cell requires for its growth inorganic food and the liberation of oxygen, so the animal cell requires for its growth organic food and the absorption of oxygen. Its food is present in the blood, and it meets the oxygen in the lungs; thus the whole blood becomes disorganized, and nothing is found after death but dark fluid blood, the fluidity indicating its loss of fibrine, the dark colour its want of oxygen, which it readily absorbs on exposure after death. Let it not be thought that microscopic particles are unable to produce such great and rapid changes. It is well known, and I have frequently timed it with my class, that a teaspoonful of human saliva will, when shaken with a like quantity of decoction of starch, convert the whole of the latter into sugar in a little less than one minute. If ptyaline, the active principle of saliva, exerts this power at most in a few minutes, then surely the active principle of the secretion of the serpent's poisoned gland may exert an infinitely greater power in as many hours.

It results then that a person dies slowly asphyxiated by deprivation of oxygen in whatever other way the poison may also act, and so far as the ordinary examination of the blood goes the post-mortem appearances are similar to those seen after drowning and suffocation. I have many reasons for believing that the *materies morbi* of cholera is a nearly allied animal poison. If so may we not hope to know something definite of the poisons of hydrophobia, small-pox, scarlet fever, and indeed of all zymotic diseases? At the suggestion of a friend I am going to try the inhalation of oxygen as a remedy.

THE NEW BREECH-LOADING COMPETITION.—The Sub-Committee on Breech-loaders has completed the first stage of its inquiry. By far the larger proportion of the arms failed to comply in every minute respect with the conditions laid down, and to which the committee have very properly closely adhered. Some were submitted too late; others were too long or too short, or too heavy, or otherwise outside the limits prescribed; and all the guns which have so failed are out of the competition for the prize. From the arms which are in the prize competition a certain number have been selected for farther trial. For the best of these arms, whether adopted for the service or not, 1,000*l.* will be awarded, and for the arm which "while attaining a satisfactory degree of excellence in other particulars is selected for merit in

respect to its breech mechanism," 600*l.* will be the prize. If the best arm appears to the committee to be worthy of adoption it will be placed in competition with the Snider rifle, which it will be required to beat before its adoption is confirmed. If, on the other hand, none of the prize arms should in the opinion of the committee satisfy the service requirements, then the best of those arms which from failure to fulfil the conditions laid down are out of the prize competition will be selected on their merits to continue the contest; and between the two sets of arms we may hope that a satisfactory weapon will at last be found. The interest, therefore, centres for the time upon the arms which have been selected to compete for the prize. These are nine in number; and it is no longer a secret that the fortunate competitors are Messrs. Albini and Brandlin, Mr. Remington, Major Fosbery, Mr. Burton (two systems), Mr. Peabody, Mr. Martini, Mr. Joslyn, and Mr. Henry. With these probably will be tried, although not as a competitor for the prize, a rifle of Mr. Westley Richards's, as the best representative of the self-consuming or partially self-consuming cartridge system. Each of the accepted competitors will be required, within four months of his receiving the notice, to furnish for experiment at Woolwich six arms in strict conformity to the specimen arm submitted, with 1,000 rounds of ammunition per arm, and a sum of 300*l.* will be paid to each such competitor to cover the expense of the six rifles and of the supply of ammunition.

PAPER BOATS.—In an article on the applications of paper we might have added, among its other uses, its substitution for leather, as machinery belting, a patent for which has just been granted, and its peculiar adaptability for the manufacture of shell boats for racing. A boatmaker of Troy has lately constructed one thirty feet long, which weighs but forty pounds, and is in every respect superior to boats made of wood. It is thin, lighter than a wooden boat, is rendered impervious to water by a coating of oil and other compounds, and is claimed to be more durable, and that it will stand shocks that would destroy a wooden shell. Such a boat cannot be split or broken, but if a hole be made in it by accident, the perforation will be no larger than the size of the object piercing it, and could be easily mended; it will not swell nor crack, requires no caulking or pitching, and, above all, the cost is much less than a wooden boat.

RESULTS OF SONOROUS VIBRATIONS.—This interesting and curious subject has again been brought before the Royal Institution by Professor Tyndall, who extended the consideration of it to the influence of vibrations on light, on streams of water, and on jets of smoke. Some of the experiments exhibited in previous lectures were repeated with variations. A long gas flame just on the point of becoming sonorous, or roaring, was put in agitation by sounds resembling the chirruping of birds; and Professor Tyndall having called on his audience to take part in the experiment, they commenced imitating the sound, and the general chirruping of the members of the Royal Institution was accompanied by violent movements of the flame. A jet of smoke was influenced by sonorous vibrations in a similar manner, a continuous jet of smoke about 2 ft. high being broken down and divided into two jets by the sound of an organ-pipe. A stream of water was similarly affected, a continuous stream having been broken into drops by the sound of a tuning-fork. [Moral: Keep quiet while fire-engines are at work in extinguishing flames, whether they be "singing flames" or roaring ones.] This experiment was varied by directing the jet of water upwards so as to form an arch; and when a tuning-fork of a certain pitch was sounded the continuous arch of fluid was broken into drops. Several other interesting experiments were exhibited to illustrate the remarkable effects of sonorous vibrations.

TRUNKS OF TREES, some of them 3 ft. in circumference, have been found in Prince Patrick's Island and Melville Island on the spot in which they grew. This place is perhaps at present the coldest spot in the northern hemisphere.

A NEW ISLAND IN THE PACIFIC.—It is reported that a new island has been discovered in the North Pacific ocean, between 50 deg. west longitude and 40 deg. 30 min. north latitude, twenty miles long. It is exactly in the track of vessels bound to China and Japan. Fogs and misty weather prevail in that portion of the Pacific. It is supposed that many missing vessels have been wrecked there. The discovery is considered to be of sufficient importance to justify the Government in dispatching a vessel to locate the exact position of the island. A company has been organized in San Francisco to survey the island, and they will send vessels to examine and take possession of it.



[THE PRINCE A CAPTIVE.]

THE DANCING FLOWER OF YOKAMA.

In all Yokama, nay in all Japan, there was not a maiden whose beauty could eclipse that of Mikoo-Chian, the daughter of Mana-Mara, a merchant of the fourth class, and his wife Fafara.

At the age of sixteen she had completely bewildered the eyes of every man, both young and old, who had had the fortune, be it considered good or bad, to see her.

And like most maidens who are possessed of rare loveliness, she knew that she was beautiful. Not only were there plenty of tongues to tell her so, but in mirrors of most perfect reflective power are made in Japan as well as in Paris and London.

Such great beauty troubled her parents exceedingly, for she was their only child. They wished to see her well settled in the world, yet knew not whom to select among her thousand and one admirers, nor would she aid them, for she was a coquette by nature, ready to trifle with all, yet not decide upon one.

But at last a dream, or rather a trio of dreams, singular in their coincidence, settled her fate.

It was after the banquet given on her seventeenth birthday, when her parents and herself had eaten very heartily of birds'-nest soup, and lizard-fricassée, that each had a dream.

The father dreamed that instead of being a merchant of the fourth class, selling only the cheaper kind of goods at retail, he was a millionaire of the first class, importing and exporting the most costly goods and wares in his own ships.

The mother dreamed that she was robed like a queen, with jewels glittering on her arms and her hair, and that a host of obsequious servants waited to obey her will and caprice in everything.

Last, and strangest of all, the maiden dreamed that

in the guise and following the avocation of a public dancing girl, she had won the love of the most handsome prince in Japan, the brother of the great Tycoon, and the heir presumptive to the throne of the empire.

When each, full of the singularity of their dreams, related them the next morning, the trio were so impressed that a soothsayer was privately sent for, and an occult consultation was held.

The soothsayer, after going through various mystic ceremonies, consulting the moon, stars, and the wise serpents of the great temple of Yokama, came to the conclusion that each dream was to come to pass, and advised that the beautiful Mikoo-Chian be at once placed among the sylphides in the ballet of the imperial theatre, where sooner or later the eyes of the young prince, Takoungawa Mimbo Taya, were sure to fall upon her.

So, sacrificing full half of all that he had in the world to attire her suitably and to bribe the director to admit her, Mana-Mara had the felicity of seeing his child, after due preparation, appear as a fairy dancer before the select public of Yokama, for there were few who could indulge in the costly luxury of a visit to the Imperial Theatre, except those attached to the suite of the Tycoon or of the prince, who had free admission.

Nearly a year was occupied in making our heroine perfect in the evolutions of her profession, and she was yet more beautiful at eighteen than when at sixteen she had enchanted all who saw her. And it was upon the eve of her eighteenth birthday, the very eve on which the young prince was nineteen, that he saw her for the first time in a grand fairy spectacle given in his honour.

And he who had hitherto been impervious to the charms and attractions of the fair sex no sooner saw her than he cried out in the presence of his tutor, the imperial teacher of all the sciences:

"Who is that angel? How came she to be dropped from heaven to startle a world with her beauty?"

"She is no angel, your royal highness," replied Foo-Foo, the great teacher. "She is only a witch of a dancing girl painted and powdered to bewilder the brains of fools and make them forget that science is the only study worthy of manly consideration."

"I tell you she is an angel," said the young prince, warmly. "And I must see and talk to her. There is not her equal in the world. See to it, Foo-Foo, that I have an interview with her. My heart is on fire!"

"But, your royal highness, what would his Imperial Mightiness the Great Tycoon say if he heard that his brother and heir had fallen in love with a pretty dancing girl?"

"No matter what he would say. He need not know it. If Foo-Foo be wise he will remember that my brother is mortal, and that when he dies I fill his place and have the power of empire in my hands. I can give or take away, and the office of teacher of all the sciences is not hereditary."

Foo-Foo knew that there was reason in this remark of the young prince, and though he had a beautiful daughter whom he intended to place before the prince at a time when his eyes might be opened to the rays of beauty, he dared not refuse to accede now to the wishes of the prince. But he made up his mind at the same time that nothing serious should arise out of this sudden infatuation of his pupil. Before that should occur he privately made up his mind that the great Tycoon himself should know of the affair and prevent his brother from taking any steps which might destroy the imperial dignity, especially such as forming a base alliance.

So after the performance was over, the prince having retired to a private saloon in the royal theatre, the beautiful dancing girl was sent for and came into his presence attended by her mother, for so careful had her mother been of her reputation that she was never suffered even to go to the theatre without being attended by one or the other of them.

If the eyes of the young prince had been dazzled by the beauty of Mikoo-Chian when he saw her moving like a winged fairy in the mazy whirl of the dance, not only were his eyes but his heart also was charmed when the nearer she came to him the more perfect her beauty seemed.

On conversing with her he found her not only modest, but sensible, for her proud parents, believing in her future fate, had employed skilful teachers, and she was more accomplished than many of the first ladies of the royal court.

Even the great Foo-Foo enviously saw that his daughter "couldn't hold a candle to her" either in beauty or sense.

The prince conversed long and earnestly with the young girl, and learned from her the whole story about the cause of her becoming a dancing girl.

"It is fate," he said, when she had told him about the dreams. "I love you, Mikoo-Chian; you shall be my wife."

"And I love you, great prince," said the beautiful girl, in a low, musical voice. "I look up to you even as I would gaze on the brightest star in heaven, wondering if I ever can reach it."

"It is fate," repeated the prince. "Mikoo-Chian will dance no more before vulgar eyes. Let her go home with her parents now, and she shall have means from my private treasury to fit her for the future position which she will hold by my side as the wife of my heart, the sharer of my throne. Every week I will visit her until the time comes when I may take her to my palace as my bride."

The happy Mikoo-Chian kissed the hand of the young prince, while tears of love and gratitude rained like a spring shower falling in the sunlight from her large, dark eyes.

There were but four in the saloon; the prince, old white-haired and long-bearded Foo-Foo, and Fafara, the mother, who gazed with loving pride upon her child. So when the prince said, "Let this be kept secret for the present," one would have supposed it would be so.

But Foo-Foo had no thought of letting the daughter of a merchant of the fourth class get the advantage of his child in a race for the throne of Japan. He determined that the Tycoon should know of the infatuation of his brother, and he well knew that if he did become aware of it his ambitious pride would be alarmed, and he would take measures to nip the passion of his brother in the bud ere it had blossomed.

It was almost morning before the prince could tear himself away from the presence of the beautiful girl, and when he parted with her he bade her mother guard her with every care, for if harm ever befell her it would be a dark hour to those through whose carelessness or agency the evil occurred.

When Mikoo-Chian and her mother got home, and Mana-Mara heard of all that had passed, he was almost crazed with joy.

"Our fortunes are all made!" he cried. "The decree of fate was written, and it will be fulfilled. I shall yet be the richest merchant in all Japan, and those who now turn up their noses as I pass will kiss the dust under my feet. The soothsayer who put us on the track of this coming greatness shall share my fortunes. To-morrow we will give a private banquet, and he shall attend."

The morrow came, and there was a right royal feast in the house of Mana-Mara. Again the costly bird's-nest soup smoked upon his table, served on the finest ware.

After dinner the soothsayer held a consultation of the stars. And a gloomy cloud hung over his face while he did so.

"There is a snake in the grass," he cried. "We have an enemy in the camp."

"Who can it be?" asked father, mother and daughter, all in one breath.

"I will soon see," said the soothsayer.

And he went out to consult the wise serpents in the great temple.

When he came back he said:

"I have discovered all. Foo-Foo, the tutor of the prince, and the teacher of all the sciences, is the snake. He has told the Great Tycoon all about the sudden love of the young prince for Mikoo-Chian, and has advised him to send the prince out of the country until she is forgotten. The Tycoon will send him to France, where the women are as beautiful as angels. He is to be kept there while the Tycoon takes measures to put you three for ever out of his way."

"What can we do?" cried they, in wild alarm.

"What has been written by the hand of fate is and must be," said the soothsayer, solemnly. "The Great Tycoon can send his brother to France, but he cannot tear from his heart the love of Mikoo-Chian, which is planted there. Nor can Foo-Foo, with all his knowledge of science, prevent those coming together whose fates are united. Mana-Mara, if it takes the last coin in your coffers, and the last robe on your back, charter or buy a swift vessel, and when the prince embarks for France steer the same course with the child on board. I too will go to invoke the light of the stars on the voyage. Let the beautiful Mikoo-Chian be the first woman to meet the prince on the shores of France, and she will be his wife in spite of Foo-Foo and the Tycoon also."

With renewed hope the merchant prepared to obey the bidding of the soothsayer. Meantime, all this was, by the orders of the latter, kept secret from the prince, who was in despair at this sudden order to leave Japan, for he suspected the cause and dared not mortally offend his brother by showing opposition to his exile.

Wretched in spirit he bade adieu to poor Mikoo-Chian, vowing eternal fidelity before he went away, and swearing to marry her the next time they met, no matter who opposed it.

Foo-Foo, glorying in the success of his plans, hurried the departure of the prince, and as he was to go with him he managed secretly to conceal his daughter in the ship, intending when they got to France to throw her in the way of the prince, and to try through her to make him forget his passion for Mikoo-Chian.

The prince, after a long and monotonous voyage, soul-sick and dispirited, arrived in France, and was received with all the honours which befit his rank by the Emperor Napoleon and his beautiful Empress.

This description may be better understood by its description in a Court Gazette.

"The Emperor and Empress received in solemn audience, yesterday the Japanese Embassy recently arrived in Paris. Prince Takoungawa Minbo Taya, the brother of the Tycoon, and the other members of the mission, were conveyed from the Grand Hotel to the Tuileries in court carriages, preceded by outriders and accompanied by an escort. A line of troops was also drawn up in the courtyard of the palace to render military honours. The Emperor and Empress were seated on their chairs of state and surrounded by all the grand officers of the Crown, Minister of Foreign Affairs and ladies of the palace.

"The Japanese prince on being presented pronounced the following address in his native language, but which was duly translated into French by an interpreter:

"Sire.—By imperial order I am charged to be present at the solemn ceremony which will take place in your capital respecting the Universal Exhibition. Japan wished in that manner to give a proof of her friendly sentiments towards France. I have the honour of presenting to your Majesty the letter which the Tycoon has addressed to you on the subject. I am very young and wanting in experience, and I know myself incompetent properly to

execute the order. But in presenting my most respectful homage to your Majesty I appeal to your benevolent indulgence, which alone will enable me to accomplish my mission. I have likewise received instructions to remain under the shadow of your Majesty's throne to study with some of my countrymen the sciences which distinguish France."

"His Highness then presented the letter in question. The Emperor expressed to the young prince the satisfaction with which he saw the brother of a sovereign with whom his government entertained the most amicable relations. His Majesty felicitated the prince on the daily development of relations between these distant countries, and which intercourse was so useful to progress and civilization.

"On the preceding day the ambassador had sent to the Emperor and Empress a variety of presents offered by the Sovereign of Japan. After the audience the prince and his suite were reconducted to their hotel with the customary ceremonial."

Upon the return of the prince he was informed that a party of strangers requested a brief interview with him on a subject of vital importance to him.

He was weary with the ceremonies through which he had been passing, and wished to refuse an interview, but old Foo-Foo, little dreaming that he was upsetting his own "lasty plate of soup," by so doing, urged him to grant the audience, inasmuch as it was best to be exceedingly gracious in this strange land.

So the prince, much against his will, consented and went to the grand saloon of the hotel to receive his visitors.

The conversation and anger of Foo-Foo, and the joy of the prince, can be imagined when the latter saw Mikoo-Chian enter in all the radiance of her beauty with her parents by her side.

Regardless of royal etiquette, regardless of the presence of his suite, the prince sprung from his seat, and, pressing the lovely girl to his heart, covered her face with kisses.

And learning soon after the agency of old Foo-Foo in his exile, the prince gave him his choice either to be at once dismissed from the embassy, or to give his countenance to the immediate marriage of the prince with the daughter of Mana-Mara.

Foo-Foo chose the latter, and that very evening, with the double ceremony of both Christian and Japanese rites, Prince Takoungawa Minbo Taya and Mikoo-Chian were married.

E. M.

RALPH MARKHAM.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE language of Reginald Norseman to the assembled wreckers and divers wrought them up to the highest pitch of passion. Little dreaming what his real character was, and supposing that the beautiful girl known to them as the "Pearl of the Reef" was truly his own child, when he stated to them that a wealthy and titled villain whom he had known in another land was in the act of carrying her off against his will as well as her own, the cry was raised that she must be rescued at all hazards.

With Vanderlip in the lead, for even now Norseman shrank from facing the earl, the crowd rushed to their boats at the waterside, in various ways, and soon approached the yacht in numbers full ten to one of her crew. Vanderlip, with his desperadoes, was still foremost, but when they saw the muzzle of the heavy cannon bearing point blank upon them, and that the officers and crew of the yacht were well armed and prepared for a desperate resistance, the speed of the boats visibly lessened, and the enthusiasm of those in them cooled manifestly.

With a speaking-trumpet in his hand the earl stood on the rail of the yacht, and as the boats came within hail he shouted:

"Back! Keep back as you value your lives! I allow no armed men to approach this vessel with hostile intent. You are being used as tools by a murderer and robber. Take a fair warning and keep off or we fire!"

"Give up the girl!" yelled Vanderlip. "For have her we will if it costs fifty lives. How dare you steal a child from her father!"

"Why does not Reginald Norseman come for her himself?" said the earl, in a tone of haughty scorn. "He can urge others to risk their lives, but he is very backward in risking his own. He is too well known now by more than one on board this craft. The young lady whom he dares to claim as his child is the orphan of the man he basely murdered years ago. Let him come and take her if he can!"

"He is coming, and so are we all, but first take a present from me!" cried Vanderlip, raising a rifle from the stern of his boat, and firing upon the earl with an aim that seldom failed of its mark.

But for once his sight was bad, and the bullet only pierced the cap of the earl, while the young nobleman, without changing his exposed position, drew a pistol from his belt, and with a sure aim returned the fire.

The arm of Vanderlip was seen to drop by his side and a yell of mingled agony and anger broke from his lips.

"I am shot!" he cried. "Forward, men, for revenge and our prize!"

And, excited for the moment beyond any feeling of fear, the wreckers again sprang to their oars.

"Shall we not fire, your lordship?" cried Captain Cavendish. "They'll board us if we don't!"

"No," cried the earl as he felt a breeze fanning his cheek. "Up with the canvas—up with it lively, men. We are safe with this wind if it lasts, and it will."

The boats were almost alongside before the yacht gathered headway; but as the canvas was hoisted and filled the beautiful vessel began to glide over the water and, despite the desperate efforts of the oarsmen to reach her side, they soon dropped away.

The wreckers had too much fear of the cannon pointing in their midst to use the few fire-arms they had, and in a few minutes the yacht was out of their range even if they felt inclined to fire.

Words were weak to describe the terrible disappointment and wrath of the two most prominent actors in the attempt to board the yacht.

Vanderlip, with fearful odds, as he writhed from the pain of his broken arm, swore that he would follow the yacht to the end of the world for satisfaction, and Reginald Norseman echoed his words.

The hate of a lifetime had been centred on the father of Plantagenet, Earl of Lonsdale, and now it was transferred to the young earl with all its bitterness.

The prize which had excited all the fiercest passion of Vanderlip was gone—the girl whom Sir Reginald Norseman had stolen from a broken-hearted mother was now with those who could restore her to the rights of which he had deprived her.

While she was in his power he had enjoyed a morbid satisfaction in the retrospective hate which partially compensated for his own dark fate—that of a fugitive from his native land—a felon with a price set upon his head.

Though the wreckers could not aid Ralph Markham or Norseman any farther at the time, rough as are their natures, they felt a sympathy for his loss, and when he said Vanderlip planned to man the swiftest vessel of the wrecking fleet, and to follow the yacht up, there was no lack of volunteers for the purpose.

Badly wounded as Vanderlip was he did not succumb to his pain, but determined to be the leader of the expedition, for he had hopes, as had Norseman also, that changes of wind or some other chance would keep the yacht on the coast until she could be overhauled.

For they were now desperate enough to risk fighting at all hazards if they could again approach the vessel which had escaped them when they believed her already in their grasp.

Yet another hope entered their breasts. The yacht was without a pilot, among reefs and currents which had wrecked many a gallant barque, and her escape was not yet certain. The evil-disposed study out and hope for all chances, and despair is the last thing they yield to.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WHILE the danger of being boarded by the wreckers was so imminent the earl himself held command on deck; but as soon as the breeze swept the yacht beyond peril he told Cavendish to take charge while he went into the cabin to assure the females of their safety.

He found them pale and anxious, but Angela most of all, for she knew best what a wild and daring set of men those wreckers were.

"Providence has favoured us with a wind, just in time to save us from an attack which would have amounted to something like piracy," said the earl, with a pleasant smile calculated to reassure the ladies.

"And Providence has spared you, my son," said his mother as she pointed to the bullet-marks in his cap. "We saw from our window the approach of the desperate men, and heard the shot fired which would have made us all wretched had it been fatal."

"And all this danger has been incurred for me," said Angela, sadly.

"Yet no greater peril than you dared, in order to save us from death and destruction," said the earl. "Fair cousin, it is but a just return for your boldness that we are able to serve you now. When our feet once more press the soil of England, and you are in possession of the estates which have so long been

occupied by strangers, you will feel in part repaid for the past, I hope."

"And yet while that cruel man lives I shall feel in constant peril," said Angela. "I know now the terrible badness of his heart, and I feel that wherever I go he will surely follow."

"It is all that I ask and pray for that he should," said the earl. "For let him but be discovered in England, nothing can save him from a shameful death. He will run a fearful risk, however he may disguise himself, if he makes the attempt."

"If you please, my lord, will you come on deck for a few moments?" said Captain Cavendish, entering the cabin, with a haste which precluded all ceremony.

"Certainly," said the earl, following the old captain instantly.

When they reached the deck Cavendish pointed to a large sloop with a mainsail, gafftopsail and jib, set, following up the reef in wake of the yacht evidently at a great rate of speed. Her deck was crowded with men, and the earl understood in a moment the errand she was upon.

"The wretches have not given up their mad idea of seizing the young lady whom I have taken under my protection," he muttered. "And while we are in here in smooth water the sloop has an advantage, with the tremendous spread of canvas which she carries. We must get out over the reef into the Gulf Stream, where the swell of the sea is heavier."

"There seems to be no chance at present, my lord," replied Cavendish, and, pointing to the long line of foaming breakers which rolled between them and the open sea, he added, "I have looked in vain for the sign of a channel through them. But I am not alarmed, my lord; we can beat the sloop off. Let the pirates come along and they shall get such a handling as Lord Nelson used to give the French and Spaniards."

"I have no doubt, if they have the folly to attack us, that we can beat them off; but we shall lose men, and we can ill afford to lose a single hand, with a long voyage before us, and the stormy season on hand."

"Perhaps your young friend knows of a channel across the reef, my lord," said the old seaman.

"I did not think of that. It may be so," said the earl, and he instantly returned to the cabin.

In less than a minute he came back with Angela by his side.

Her face became more pale as she glanced back at the huge sloop in their wake.

"That is the *Texas*, the largest and fastest vessel on the reef," she said as she looked. "And full of men! Oh, if that murderer leads them we are lost!"

"Not lost, armed and manned as we are," said the earl, with a reassuring calmness. "But we have something else to think of just now. Captain Cavendish suggested that you might, from our bearings, know of some channel through the reef in sight. Once outside in a rough sea-way we can easily out sail that sloop. Such vessels, with one ponderous mast to support an immensity of canvas, are only fast in smooth water."

Angela looked anxiously around, and marked the islands which they were passing so swiftly on their left, with a careful eye.

"Were we up as far as Black Caesar's Creek there is a narrow but deep channel through the reef, bearing exactly south-west of it. I have been up there when the divers were busied in raising articles from a ship wrecked north of it."

"How far have we to sail to reach the point you speak of?" asked the earl.

"Full ten miles yet," replied Angela. "But if you kept out nearer the reef you might before we reached that see some channel, for there are others that I have heard the wreckers speak of, though I do not know where they are myself."

"The advice is good. Bear away more to the south-west, captain," said the earl. "Were it not a risk to fire on the vessel of another nation before knowing her positively to be a pirate I could easily disable the sloop with our heavy gun. But were that done I should lay myself liable to a difficulty with some of their men-of-war should any chance still keep us near this coast."

The chase was now most exciting. The breeze had freshened considerably, and both vessels carried every stitch of canvas which they could set. The foam flew from under the sharp, flaring bows of the yacht in two great drifts and flared away astern until it reached the bows of the sloop, which, throwing up a similar surge, was following the yacht so fast.

"Does she gain any now?" asked the earl of Cavendish, who was examining the sloop through his glass.

"Yes, my lord, slowly though. I can make out the form of the fellow you shot, I think, standing

forward with his arm in a red sling. They have a deck full of men. In good canvas range we could make them as sick as Lord Nelson made the French at Trafalgar."

"If the worst come they shall have both grape and canister," said the earl. "Seeing us keep away towards the reef, they may think of crowding us on it. But before that occurs they shall know the weight of our metal."

"And find our mettle rather meddlesome maybe!" said Doctor Heavysides, in a low tone.

He could not forego his habit, no matter what was occurring.

"Please let me look through the glass," said Angela to the captain.

With a bow which would have been graceful in his younger days the old seaman handed her the glass, and she at once turned it towards the sloop.

"Whom do you recognize, my fair cousin?" asked the earl.

"Vanderlip for one," she answered. And she quickly added: "I see standing by his side the man whom you call Reginald Norseman. He holds a glass in his hand also, and I doubt not recognizes me; for now he lowers his glass and turns to speak to his companion. And others are crowding forward in the sloop; other glasses are raised and pointed towards us."

"I wish every man on board would get forward into the very eyes of the sloop," said the old seaman. "Get her down by the head and her speed will be lessened a good deal. We are trimmed to an inch, and I know too much to alter our trim. Thank heaven a stern chase is a long one! Do not move if you please, young lady, as long as they will keep their eyes on you."

"I will not. But look away to the south-west if you please, sir. There is a spot where the foam is not so high, where it breaks scarcely any."

"By all that is good above, my fair cousin, you are right!" cried the earl, springing up into the rigging. "There is a narrow space of smooth water there which must be a channel. But we must luff and get the wind at once to reach it."

"And that cannot be done, my lord, under all this canvas. Speak quickly if you will risk the chances, and we'll have everything off our spars but fore and main sails and jib."

"Aye, in with the canvas and luff! I will pilot her through!" cried the earl; and he sprang to a seat in the slings of the foretopmast yard.

"Lower away and clew up topsail, topgallant-sail and royal!" shouted Captain Cavendish. "Down with the flying jib and foretopmast staysail! In with the main-gaff-topsail! No furling! We've no time for that now!"

"Hard a lee! Let her come up eight points—there—steady at that!" shouted the earl from aloft. "Flatten in main, fore and jib sheets!" cried Captain Cavendish.

These orders were obeyed as promptly as they were given, and then the schooner, with her lee rail nearly under water, rushed into a channel not double her width, the breakers running full as high as her yard-arms on either side.

It was a terrible moment. The roar of the surf, the loud flapping of the unfurled sails, were unheard or unnoticed by the breathless crew, who well knew that touching a hidden rock, or striking a projecting point of the reef on either hand, would be sure and instant destruction.

No one even thought of looking towards the enemy then. They could see the blue waves of the Gulf Stream rolling mountains high not ten ships' lengths ahead. Once there, rough as it was, there was safety. Oh, many a whispered prayer went up then from lips not used to praying. Not one but asked Him who rules wind and water to spare and guide them through that danger.

A few minutes only—yet it seemed an hour to all—and the beautiful schooner bounded out from that Red Sea of peril, and rose and fell on the long waves of the outside ocean.

And then a cheer louder than ever before heard on those decks rose from the crew of the yacht, and as the vessel bounded beyond the breakers her course was so altered that the square-sails could again be sheeted home and hoisted, and while this was being done the young earl came down from his post, as pilot, to receive the congratulations of his mother and sister, as well as of his cousin, for there was no one who could have remained below in the cabin in that scene.

And now all had time to look over the white range of breakers to see how their escape was taken by those who were upon the sloop.

So much way had the yacht lost by taking in sail and luffing, that the sloop was nearly abreast of the channel when the schooner squared away down the Gulf Stream.

But those on board of her knew but too well that

with her huge mast she would fare but badly on the rough rollers outside, and that even if she did not pitch the mast overboard she could not carry canvas enough on it either to steady her or to give her half the headway that the schooner now was making.

So she still stood on her course inside the reef, now nearly parallel with the direction the schooner was taking, as if those on board felt some satisfaction in keeping in view, or else had some hope of a misfortune overtaking her which would put her yet in their power.

But to know their real motive we must go back to the sloop herself and know what occurred there.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"Do you see her?" asked Vanderlip as Norseman stood by his side in the bows of the sloop, with glass in hand, at the moment that the schooner first altered her course towards the reef.

"Yes!" Norseman said, in a tone only loud enough for Vanderlip to hear it. "Yes, and she knows enough about the reef to tell them that there is a channel nearly abreast of them by which they can get outside where we can never follow them with this wind and sea."

Then he shouted to the helmsman of the sloop:

"Luff there, luff! The yacht is going to try to get outside. They see we are gaining on them in smooth water and mean to try the rough. But they'll stick—I know they'll stick. The channel they are steering for isn't ten fathoms wide, and there are more than a dozen sunken rocks in it. If they strike they are either lost or they are ours."

There was an instantaneous rush forward of everyone on board the sloop that could get there, and as many as had spy-glasses put them in use. The "Pearl of the Reef," easily distinguishable by the golden curls floating out in the fresh wind, was instantly recognized by almost all the wreckers.

"They are using your daughter for a pilot, I think, Ralph," said one old wrecker, named Horseman. "She has rowed about in her little boat till she knows as much about some parts of the reef as we do."

"Yes, I fear it is the case," said Ralph, in a sullen tone. "I was a fool ever to let her go out on the water. But it was a pasture for her, and I thought no harm would come of it. If the yacht should get safely out into the Gulf Stream it may be the last I'll ever see of her."

"The more fool for you to say so, Ralph Markham!" said Vanderlip, hoarsely. "I've sworn to see her again, and to have revenge for this broken arm. And I'd keep that oath if it took years to do it in."

"They've struck the channel—there she goes right into it, her square-sails flying loose, but the fore and aft canvas is as flat as a board!" cried Horseman. "Whoever it is that handles that yacht knows what he is about."

"He'll not know it long if she strikes!" cried Vanderlip. "And strike she must—curse on her—strike she must!"

"Ne'er a touch!" said Horseman, the only one who spoke now, for the rest were breathlessly watching the perilous passage.

"It is false!" shouted Vanderlip. "See her veering away there. She is on the point of the reef."

"You are blind, man, or crazy," said Horseman. "She is beyond the reef, and altering her course down the Gulf. You'll see her square-sails on her in a little while. There they go now!"

"He is right," cried Ralph, bitterly. "And we must follow—we will follow, even there!"

"Not while I'm owner of this craft. I'll let you have her use freely, Ralph Markham, in smooth water, where no leak in the world can outrun her. But out there you know she wouldn't keep her mast in five minutes; if she didn't run under. My life is worth something to me if my sloop isn't."

And Horseman clenched his association with an oath.

"Forgive me, Horseman, but if you know how I hate to lose my girl you wouldn't mind all that I say."

"I know it is a hard case, Ralph," replied the wrecker. "And to show you how much I feel for you, instead of giving up the chase now, I will keep on inside the reef clean to the Cape Florida lighthouse, on Key Biscayne, if the yacht yet remains in sight."

"Good!" exclaimed Vanderlip. "There may yet be a chance. For if old Coste is there with his revenue cutter we may spin him a yarn long enough to get him to go out after the yacht."

"That is so," said Ralph, now a little more assured.

The sloop ran quickly on with a speed that kept the yacht in sight—we know the reason why.

CHAPTER XXV.

Go back with us, reader, to Shropshire—go back also in time beyond any previous chapter of our history, for the purpose of viewing three pictures—scenes necessary for us to paint that you may understand changes wrought among some of our most important characters, and help us in properly unravelling a mystery yet too profound to more than one of the life-actors in it.

PICTURE FIRST.

A dark dell, overhung by a rocky hill, down which tumbles one of those bright rivulets which make scenes, otherwise repulsive, beautiful.

The dell is not only darkened by the abrupt hill which borders one side, but by a thick forest of leafy oaks on the other.

Through the few yards of level greensward, speckled with violets and forget-me-nots, in this dell, the small stream wanders away without a ripple, or a sound, strangely still indeed after its noisy leaps down the hill, but its bosom is flecked with white bunches of foam, the result of its down-hill gambols.

Though there is a glimpse of sunshine on the hill-top, there is none in the dell; silence and gloom seem to predominate everywhere, bright waters flow and sweet flowers are creeping up from the earth.

Not a human habitation is in sight, not a road or footpath to be seen—not even a bird is seen among the branches, or its song heard there.

A fitting place for a tragedy to be enacted in, is not such a theatre?

The curtain does not rise or fall, nor is the prompter's bell sounded, but three persons come slowly up along the banks of the little stream and pause in the centre of the dell.

One is a man past the middle age of life, tall, well proportioned, and of that dignified mould and expression of face which tell at a glance that he is not only noble by heritage of birth, but also by nature.

Another, much younger, blue-eyed and brown-haired, looks also like a nobleman by birth and nature.

The face of the first is sad and gloomy—that of the second gay and careless.

The third person is a man whose livery tells his position, as well as the look of deference on his face as he walks in the rear carrying a handsome inlaid box, about three feet in length and eighteen inches wide, under his arm.

"This is the spot," said the eldest gentleman, and then, turning to the servant, he added: "Thomas, put down that case and then go back to the carriage and wait for us."

The man put down the box, and, raising his hat, said, in a tone of entreaty:

"May it please your lordship that I stay here? Not that I want to see what I know is to be done, but because I may be of use. Something tells me I shall be needed."

"No, Thomas, no. Witnesses are not required in a case like this," said the person addressed.

"My lord, if foul play were to occur here, as I feel sure it will, witnesses will be needed. Your lordship, I have been honoured with a place near your person since I was a child, and I entreat your lordship's permission to remain."

"Let him stay, Lonsdale; he is faithful, and will not betray anything that occurs. He was a witness to the gross insult which led to this meeting—he may as well be present when I punish the insulter, for as sure as I live Sir Reginald Norseman shall go lame after this morning for the rest of his life. I am not bloodthirsty, and will not kill him, but a ball through his knee will spoil his dancing hereafter."

"Well, be it as you say, Ashton. But for form's sake let it not be known to the others that we have kept a servant present. You can step aside under the cover of the trees yonder and yet be within hearing and call. Do you understand me, Thomas?"

"Yes, my lord. And I am thankful for the position."

And with these words the servant stepped back out of sight among the branches to the left of the dell.

Hardly had he vanished from view when loud and laughing voices were heard coming from a direction directly opposite that by which the first persons entered the dell. And a minute later three persons came from that quarter opposed in everything but dress to the two first described by us.

One was a tall, muscular man, dressed fashionably, but with a face marked not only by dissipation, but by a rude and malignant look, and evidently of a coarse and brutal disposition.

The next was a smaller, red-faced man, in the uniform of an officer who carried a pistol-case under his arm.

The third also carried a case, but it contained sur-

gical instruments, and his dress as well as his looks betokened his profession.

The other two were boisterous in their levity. He was quiet, but he had a look of cold heartlessness peculiar to men of his trade.

"You were here before the time, it seems, for we are punctual to a minute, my lord," said the person in uniform to the eldest of the party.

"In a matter so important as this, Major Debrosses, punctuality is not a fault," replied the gentleman addressed. "I am ready to proceed according to the preliminaries suggested by me and accepted by yourself last evening."

"All right, my lord. As the challenge comes from you we have the right of distance, weapons, and position."

"We shall not differ about that, major," replied the nobleman.

"Then, my lord, we will say ten paces. You have brought your own pistols I see. You can use one of ours or your own as you choose. I know mine; they have been used before."

"We use one of our own weapons," said the nobleman. "We will toss for the word."

"We claim the word also," said the tall, reckless-looking man, hastily.

"My business is with your second—not with yourself, Sir Reginald," said the noble lord.

"We will toss, of course. Here is a sovereign; which side will you choose, my lord?" exclaimed the officer.

"The head!" cried the other, as the officer raised a shining piece of gold in his hand.

"All right, my lord."

And the piece of gold flew into the air.

"But you have lost," he cried, in the next breath, as he picked up the piece of gold just as the nobleman stooped to examine it.

"You have every advantage! yet it will not avail you or your principal," said the nobleman, coldly.

"The word must be given according to the code. It can be done by you as well as by me; and mark me, sir—it must be given plainly and loudly."

"You need have no fear but that it will be given correctly, my lord. We will now prepare the weapons, and then pace the distance."

The nobleman assented; and, having opened his pistol-case, proceeded, as usual in such matters, to load one of the pistols for his principal; and one to use for himself, in case of treachery.

The ground was then chosen and marked off, the adroit major placing his man in the darkest part of the dell, while he left the lightest stand for the friend of the other.

"Even that will not avail you; for see, there is a slight opening beyond, which makes the form of Sir Reginald distinct," said the nobleman, in an indignant tone.

Returning to the place where the pistols were laid side by side, the major, as if by accident, raised the pistols of the opposite party, and quick as thought the pan of one was opened and the priming displaced.

"I have the wrong weapons, my lord," he said, in an apologetic tone, instantly exchanging with the other.

The nobleman bowed haughtily, and proceeded with his friend to the assigned spot where he was to stand.

Handing him his weapon, he said, in a low tone:

"Ashton, remember and fire as you have practised—at the word one. Norseman will take more time, and after you have fired I don't fear his aim."

"The result is sure," replied the other, quietly.

"My nerves were never more steady."

The nobleman fell back a few paces, and with his pistol in hand waited the movements of the major.

The latter, having placed his man, returned, not to his proper position, midway between, but out of line, and paused for an instant to speak to the surgeon.

At that moment a shrill cry rose from the bushes in the rear of Lord Ashton.

"Oh, look out, my lord; he is raising his pistol now!" was shrieked out.

And at the same instant the pistol of Sir Reginald Norseman was fired with an aim but too deliberate, for at the sound of the servant's voice the unfortunate Lord Ashton half turned to see what it meant. The ball of the vile wretch pierced his heart ere he could even turn to glance at the spot where Norseman stood.

"Oh, murderer!" shouted the Earl of Lonsdale, raising his pistol with a deliberate aim and pulling the trigger upon the miscreant, who stood, with a sardonic smile, looking at his victim.

Of course the weapon did not explode, and with a sardonic laugh Sir Reginald Norseman turned and left the field, while the agonized earl and the servant, who had rushed from his place of concealment, raised the body of poor Lord Ashton from the earth.

No efforts of theirs could avail. Life had left the body of the young nobleman before it lay upon the ground.

"There is no use for me, I see," said the surgeon, who coldly glanced at the spot whence the blood was oozing.

And he turned to his case of instruments as calmly as if no wrong had been done.

"It was what I feared, my lord," groaned the servant. "I cried out the instant I saw Sir Reginald raise his hand, for I saw murder in his eye."

"It is a murder for which he shall yet hang as sure as there is a heaven!" moaned the earl. "And his second too shall suffer, for he has fled, and that is proof of his guilt, as well as that of Norseman's."

"My lord, I at least am innocent, for I was employed professionally to come, with no hint of any treachery," said the surgeon.

"I believe you, doctor," said the earl, for you have not fled with the assassins. But I must bear home the body of my poor friend. I have a terrible duty to perform when I relate his fate to his young wife. It will kill her."

Aided by the servant the earl raised the body of his murdered friend and carried it away from the dark dell, which was marked with blood for the first time.

The surgeon took his case of instruments up, and as he did so he also picked up a piece of gold which lay upon the ground near by.

It appeared at the first glance to be a sovereign, but a second look showed it to be a counterfeit one marked on both sides in the same manner.

"The word was won with this. Yet for what use, since it was not given? I will keep it, for it may yet be worth something handsome, for silence in a case like this can only be purchased. I must see Major Debrosses as soon as possible. He may not fly—but Sir Reginald must."

PICTURE SECOND.

In as pretty a residence as the hand of man could build, in a room furnished as only taste aided by abundant wealth could do it, a young fair-haired lady was seated, talking to a sweet little girl who could do but little more than kiss her name as mother.

Both were beautiful, both so like—one mature, the other a bud of the same branch.

"Papa will soon be home," said the lady as she pressed her red lips upon the white brow of the innocent in her lap. "He went out early for a morning ride, but he never stays away long. Ah, I hear the carriage coming up the avenue. We will go to meet him."

Taking the pretty infant up in her arms, the lady went out to the front porch of the house just as a carriage drew up. The footman leaped from his position in rear of the coach and opened the carriage door. But one person stepped out, and that was William, Earl of Lonsdale. His face was ashy pale, and in an instant more it was as red as carnation as he saw the lady and child upon the porch.

"Where is Sir Lionel, my lord?" asked the lady, anxiously, as the earl slowly advanced towards her.

"Business of great importance detained him," said the earl, in a tremulous voice.

He was a brave man, but he dared not tell the lady that she was a widow.

"He may be absent some time from you," he said—"for some time, but I know you will bear that like a heroine, Lady Caroline."

"Bear what, Sir William?" said the lady, huskily, her own face white as snow, for her quick eye had caught sight of something which he had not thought of in his wild agitation.

It was a drop of blood upon his white shirt bosom, and with her finger on which the ring of marriage rested she touched the spot.

"Lady Caroline, be firm. I cannot keep it from you!" he moaned rather than spoke. "Sir Lionel has been badly hurt in a duel, and I am only too unhappy to bear the news to you!"

"Hurt? He has been killed! I see it in your haggard face!" she screamed, wildly; and the next instant she fell senseless at his feet.

Twenty or more servants rushed out when her scream of agony pierced the air.

"Carry your lady in quickly before she recovers to see a sight too piteous for her to bear!" exclaimed the earl to some of them.

And while some lifted the lady a nurse raised the wondering little child—too young yet to weep for a sorrow it could not understand.

And then more slowly other servants bore the body of their murdered master into the house which he had left happily but a few hours before.

Then the earl hurried away to put the officers of the law on the track of the murderer and his accomplice.

(To be continued.)

SEA-WATER FOR THE EXHIBITION.—The French Government cistern-lighters *Cruche* and *Filtre* have returned to Havre, after conveying a cargo of sea-water to Paris for the great aquarium of the Exhibition. Each of those vessels had taken on board 150 cubic metres of water, but not finding a sufficient depth in the channel of the upper Seine, had to discharge a quantity, and could only deliver from 120 to 110 metres at the Champs de Mars. They will consequently have to make several trips to Paris, as not less than 1,500 cubic metres are required to fill the aquarium.

OLIVIA'S LOVER.

OLIVIA CHARLEY sat in the wide, bright room at Ringwood, which was considered especially hers, but where the rest liked to linger, as somehow the pleasantest room in the house. It was a pleasant room, but it was charmed with the presence of a woman, which perhaps had something to do with it.

Olivia was an invalid. She would have been a beautiful, full-statured woman but for some nervous ailment which had for three years crippled her lower limbs, and forced her little feet to lie all day upon cushions.

She had a very quiet face, a little weary perhaps—for it was sad for youth and beauty to be so disabled—but it was the quiet face of one who had learned to endure.

She sat in a wheeled chair which, as she touched it, moved noiselessly whither she chose.

There was a fire upon the hearth, and before it stood a young man, Sidney Grant, Olivia's cousin by courtesy, being the adopted son of that uncle, who, in dying, had bequeathed all his large property to Olivia and her brother Jocelyn, instead of to Sidney, as everyone had expected he would.

Sidney Grant must have looked a handsome, bright-faced, rather merry fellow in his genial moments, but the present did not seem such. His chestnut brown hair was drooping over his forehead, and he stood half sulky, half ashamed, biting his lips savagely, and not looking at Olivia.

He had just asked her to marry him, and she, with her face paler even than his wont, and her little hands shaking with agitation, was saying:

"Yes, Sidney, I heard you; I was on the landing, and heard you say all these shameful and unjust things about Jocelyn, and—about me. You don't love me, Sidney, you know you don't. You only want to marry me for the pitiful money. For shame! You are welcome to my share of it. I wish you had twice as much, rather than you should have asked me to marry you because of it."

Sidney did not try to look at her as he asked:

"What was it I said about you, Olivia? I don't remember. I have felt so bitter, that I have said a great many things I did not mean. Perhaps that was one."

"You meant it," Olivia answered, quietly: "you said that I was a tame, spiritless little thing, and you had about as love do without the money as to take me with it. I may be tame and spiritless—I haven't much to make me otherwise—but you can have the money much easier than you can have me, and you must have it without me, if you have it at all."

"I don't want your money, Olivia," the young man jerked out between his teeth, and, after a pause:

"I was a pitiful scoundrel to want to marry you because of the money—and I did, partly for that, and partly to plague Jocelyn."

"It would not plague Jocelyn. Jocelyn is a much better friend to you than you deserve he should be. He even does not resent it, though he knows what you have said about the will."

"Because he knows it is true."

"It is not true; you must not say such things to me, Sidney. Jocelyn Charley is one of the noblest, most upright gentlemen that ever lived. I, his sister, say it, and who should know him better than I? It was not his fault that my uncle George in making his will ignored your existence in our favour, that he willed his property to us instead of to you. Why should you have it more than we?"

"I had reason to expect it would be mine," said Sidney, still sullen, but a little less so, and looking more frankly at Olivia. "I was his son by adoption. I know that he meant to leave me his money. It does not look reasonable that he should leave it all away from me, unless he was influenced against me by others."

"Do you want to know why he did so? I will tell you. It was because he had found out what sort of life you were leading; how—in plain terms, Cousin Sidney—how dissipated you were. He did not wish to leave his money to be spent as he be-

lieved you would spend it; and he thought money would be a curse rather than a blessing to a man living the life you were."

Olivia, aggravated by what had already passed, spoke with great spirit; and Sidney was also hasty.

"Did he think that taking from me the fortune I had been taught to expect would reform me, or did he delegate that delicate task to you?" he said, with an emphasis so angry that it was almost sarcastic.

Olivia coloured vividly and her eyes shone. But she spoke more quietly, when her lips opened again.

"You are scarcely human to speak so to me," she began.

Sidney interrupted her.

"I was a brute! forgive me before you go any farther, Olivia!"

He was kneeling beside her chair, his too handsome face upturned to Olivia Charley's; his fine eyes raised with pleading eloquence to hers. Olivia's heart was not a hard one, albeit he had hurt her so deeply, and though she would have died sooner than have him know it, that little sensitive organ of hers had been too deeply touched by his handsome face and winning ways to be otherwise than soft to him. She turned her face from him, but he caught between his little white hand resting upon her knee, and pleaded so earnestly to be forgiven that she looked again at him with a sad but very sweet smile.

"It was not my fault, cousin," she said, gently, her delicate cheek flushing, "that my Uncle George made your regaining half his money conditional upon marrying a poor, crippled, spiritless little thing like me."

His head drooped guiltily at this quotation of his own words. He had in a passion spoken as she said; but he did not think so now. He caught his breath with a half-sob, and she could see his white forehead flushing with shame as he left the room; and then, as she covered her face with her hands, tears forced their way through the slender, jewelled fingers.

"Jocelyn," she said, as her brother leaned tenderly over her chair that evening, "I want to ask a great—a very great favour of you."

Her sweet face paled as she spoke.

"Well, pet," said he, kindly, "it could not well be too great for me to grant."

"Ah, you don't know. Will you promise beforehand?"

Jocelyn looked down into the pretty, pale, anxious face. She was his only and darling sister, and he was not accustomed to refuse her anything. He felt, however, a little doubtful now; but what could she want that she ought not to have? Surely nothing; so he said, laughing at the changing expression of her face:

"Yes—no—yes!"

"You promise!" she exclaimed, clasping her childish fingers. "You said yes."

"I believe I did," her brother said, laughing still, but curious.

She drew her ear down to her lips.

"I want you to let me give all my share of Uncle George's money to Sidney."

Jocelyn Charley's face grew grave in an instant.

"You are not in earnest, pet?"

He called her pet habitually.

"Yes, very firmly."

"But why?"

"Because I don't want it and he does, and you know you have enough for both of us, and"—archly—"you had rather share with me than not."

Jocelyn pondered a few moments.

"You have refused Sidney?"

"Yes," looking away suddenly.

"But I thought you liked him," Jocelyn said, bluntly.

"I do—not enough to marry him, though."

She corrected herself without betraying Sidney. She wished her brother to know the truth.

"He would not want me to marry him if it were not for the money," she said. "I prefer that he should have it without feeling that he must take me with it. You know, Jocelyn, it cannot be at all pleasant to me to feel that my money is extended to Sidney as a sort of bribe to him to marry a poor crippled girl like me."

"But Uncle George only promised him the money through you. If he cannot win your consent to marry him you retain the money; it all rests with you."

"I know; and for that very reason I wish to resign it. You will have to support me hereafter, brother. Will you attend to the business part at once—please at once?"

Jocelyn reasoned and persuaded, but in vain. Olivia was firm, and he ended by agreeing to do as she wished.

"He won't have it," was Jocelyn's announcement to Olivia after a vigorous effort to make Sidney ac-

cept the gift. "He flushed up as though I had insulted him, and swore with his eyes flashing that he would not touch a farthing of it."

"I expected he would," said Olivia, quietly. "It is merely a question of firmness between us, and we shall see who has the most."

Inwardly she added:

"I may be spiritless, but I've got as much firmness as Sidney Grant."

It is so hard for women to forgive such speeches as that whatever they may say; and whoever knew a woman forget?

"You can deposit it somewhere in his name I suppose; can't you, Jocelyn?" she went on.

Jocelyn saw she was in earnest, and said he supposed he could.

"Shall I tell him?" he asked.

Olivia thought a moment.

"Yes; I think it would be better to do so."

Ten minutes after Jocelyn had left the room Sidney rushed in, his eyes wild.

"You said you would forgive me," he began. "Is this the way you do it?"

Olivia looked up astonished. It is only women who can put on that air of innocent unconsciousness, when they know perfectly well what you are talking about.

"You thought I needed still more humiliating, did you?" he went on, passionately. "However much I need that, I will not touch the money—you may know I will not."

"You can do as you like, you know," Olivia said, smilingly. "It will repose safely at your banker's till you are of a different mind."

"That I shall never be. Oh! Olivia, you might have spared me this."

He looked so distressed and chagrined that out of sheer pity Olivia explained:

"I could not do otherwise; in justice to myself. Besides, the spirit of my uncle's condition is already fulfilled."

"What do you mean?"

She looked at him in kind earnestness, but seemed perplexed how to express herself. With his quick intuitions, Sidney caught at her meaning, and in that frank way peculiar to him, and which was so impulsive as to be almost boyish, he said:

"I was never half so bad as you all thought. I was bad enough, though; and this—this bad luck—no, this sort of check, you know—came just in time, I suppose, after all. I'm a new man, Olivia, if that is what you mean, and I'm happier to have you think that of me, after what has happened, than to have the paltry money."

"And yet he would have parted with his manhood for it yesterday," Olivia could not help saying to herself.

He read aright the expression of her eye, or else he had the same thought, for he added, quickly:

"It is true, contradictory as it may seem."

"I believe you," Olivia said, simply, leaning back in her wheeled chair, and looking up at him, with eyes as serene and lustrous as the heavens, but just as unwavering.

"You will be generous," he said, "and not bother me any more about that money."

"I shan't bother you, of course; and I am not generous—I am only just."

He bit his lip, and took two or three turns about the room. He was nearly losing his temper, but controlled himself.

Suddenly he dropped on his knee by her chair, exactly as he had done the night before.

"I swear to you, Olivia," he said, taking her hands in his, "if I asked you to marry me yesterday without loving you I love you to-day without asking you to marry me. I do indeed. You don't believe me, but it is true when it is too late."

"I don't believe you; certainly I do not. Besides, you are assuming too much," she said, laughing.

"Am I? To be sure. But I used to fancy you cared for me. And you didn't."

He went out of the room abruptly then, and the subject was not resumed during the week he still stayed at Ringwood, excepting that Jocelyn presented him with a bundle of vouchers from the bank one day, and Sidney sent them at his head in return.

If Olivia had found Sidney agreeable before, he was something infinitely beyond what she had hitherto known of him during that last week of his stay.

He had always, up to the day of Olivia's refusal of him, been, to speak plainly, more or less sulky.

But that was all over now, and it is impossible to do justice in words to the vivacity, the gay good humour with which he overflowed, or to describe what an altogether fascinating and agreeable companion he proved himself.

At the end of the week he went away from Ring-

wood, and they did not hear again from him for two years.

There came a letter then, characteristic enough to have betrayed its identity without any signature. It was to Olivia of course, and ran thus:

"Somebody has died and left me some money. Of course I'm sorry he's dead, but I'm glad of the money, and I'm coming down to Ringwood to ask you to marry me. Sincerely."

Olivia read the letter and looked at herself in the glass with a very pleasurable consciousness that the two past years had made her more beautiful than she was before. Then she made Jocelyn promise not to meddle, and went back into her wheeled chair as though she had never left it and never expected to do so.

It was the way Sidney expected to find her, and he knelt before her thus with the reverent tenderness he would have offered his patron saint.

He had lost nothing either of his good looks; and Olivia felt a proud consciousness that he was exactly the man he looked.

"But a crippled wife, Sidney," she said, blushing exquisitely and trying to look grave; "you should well consider—"

"My darling!" he exclaimed, in his old abrupt, wild fashion, "if I had come back to Ringwood, and found only this little finger (kissing it) I would have entreated it to be my wife all the same. Don't you love me a little, Olivia?"

Putting her dainty, jewelled finger-tips upon his shoulders, she stepped out of her chair as a queen might have come down from her throne, and stood resplendent in health and beauty before him.

"Oh, Olivia, you can walk!" he cried, with a look of mingled rapture and amazement; "and," as her rosy lips lingered at his ear, "you love me. Heaven bless my darling!" C. C.

FACETIÆ.

THE speaker who was "drawn out" measured eighteen inches more than before.

THE only blusterer from whom a brave man will take a blow is the wind.

A COUNTRY boy, who had read of sailors heaving up anchors, wanted to know if it was sea sickness that made them do it.

AT what time of life may a man be said to belong to the vegetable kingdom? When long experience has made him sage.

THE brave man tries his sword, the coward his tongue—the old coquette her gold, her face, the young.

SLANDER is more accumulative than a snowball. It is like a salad, which everyone sweetens to his own taste, or the taste of those to whom he offers it.

A MONEY-HUNTER being about to marry a fortune, a friend asked him how long the honeymoon would last. "Don't tell me of the honeymoon," he replied; "it is the harvest-moon with me."

IT is said that President Johnson will pay a visit to Paris. His object is to examine carefully our liberal laws. He will bring a microscope with him. —*Charivari.*

WHY is a nugget of gold found at Ballarat, Australia, like the Prince of Wales? Because it is a production of Victoria, and may soon become a sovereign.

A MAN recently made application for insurance on a building situated in a village where there was no fire-engine. He was asked: "What are the facilities in your village for extinguishing fires?" "Well, it rains sometimes," he replied.

"Rose, my dear," said a mother to her daughter, "if you are so prim and reserved you will never get a husband." "Ma," replied the young lady, "unless the poets tell fibs, a prim Rose is not without attractions."

MANY IN ONE.—What word is that in the English language the first two letters of which signify a man—the three first a woman—the four first a great man—and the whole a great woman? Heroine.

EGGS with iron shells will be a fact at the Paris Exhibition. A Berlin chemist caused his hens to produce them by feeding them on a preparation in which iron was made to take the place of lime. The eggs may do very well for transportation, but how about the chickens?

"FICHU IMBECILE."—One of the notoriously undressy French ladies of court, met at a ball, a few evenings since, with a rebuff to which she is little accustomed. Dressed in her usual exaggerated fashion—next to nothing for corset, and a train a yard long sweeping behind her—a gentleman had the misfortune to step upon the surpluſage, when the

lady turned upon him with an expression which is seldom heard out of the French Billingsgate—"Fichu, imbecile"—which may be rendered in English by "Damn you, you fool." Fichu, while it is an extremely low expression of contemptuous annoyance, is also the French for neckerchief; so the gentleman, without in the least lessening his temper, took his revenge by replying, "Madame, *fichu* would be more becoming on your shoulders than in your mouth."

A GENTLEMAN riding a very ordinary-looking horse, asked a negro whom he met how far it was to a neighbouring town, whither he was going. The negro, looking at the animal under the rider, with a broad grin of contempt, replied: "Wi' dat ar horse, massa, it's jist fo'teen miles. Wi' a good chunk ob a horse, seven miles; but if you jist had Massa Jimmy's horse! gosh! you're dare now!"

THE MICE IN THE CABINET.

Not long since, so the story goes,

A pleasant argument arose

Between a young and aged mouse

Who boarded at a country house,

Relating to a cabinet

In which those wranglers often met.

"My son," 'twas thus the senior spoke,

"Be sure, 'tis good old English oak.

How firm it stands! What force could break it?

An earthquake scarce could move or shake it."

"You're wrong, dear dad, 'tis modern deal,

A fact which varnish can't conceal.

'Tis highly polished, I admit,"

The young mouse said with gestures fit.

"But touch it lightly, or you may

Depend there'll be a split some day.

"A mouse convinced against his will,"

Thus *piſe* replied, "Look at the Bill,

And that will show, some other aid,

Of what materials 'tis made!"

With earnest eyes the bill they scan

(A bill due to a working-man).

And then Mouse *filio*, who loves his jokes,

Cries, "Dad, this firm don't deal in oak:

And if you look at it again

The cabinet has got a grain.

As rough as any common trap,

Which holds of toasted cheese a scrap:

But traps are not set for naught,

Let's watch and see who'll first be caught."

MORAL.

Trust not alone external show,

But cautious learn what lies below.

For cabinets, those polished things,

Contain sometimes peculiar springs,

Which, though obscure to vulgar sight,

Mice can discern, both brown and white.

PUNCH.

A GENTLEMAN, talking with an estate agent about the situation of a farm which he was about to purchase of him in a level neighbourhood, remarked: "The country is exceedingly beautiful, and I do so admire a rich flat." "So do I, sir," said the obsequious but grinning agent.

SIR GEORGE GREY, once turning a corner, came suddenly upon some young barristers who were in the act of aping his walk and gestures. "You mistake, gentlemen," said the good-natured wit, accosting them; "that is not the *air* of the rose—it is only the stalk."

AT THE EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS.

Lady: "Mr. Critic, pray tell me what you consider the prettiest thing here?"

Critic: "Well, as I am a man of truth and candour, I think you are."

JOSH BILLINGS ON LAUGHTER.—I don't like a giggler. This kind of laugh is like the dandylien, a feeble yellow, and not a bit of good smell about it. It is true that any kind of a laugh is better than none—but give me the laugh that looks out of a man's eyes fast to see if the coat is clear, then steals down into a dimple, and rides in an eddy that swirls, then waltzes a spell, at corners of his mouth, like a thing of life, then bursts its bonds of duty, and fills the air for a moment with a shower of silvery-tongued sparks—then steals back, with a smile, to its lair, in the haste to wait again for its prey. This is the kind of laugh that I love, and ain't afraid of."

In one of the King of Prussia's visits to the Paris Exhibition he went to the section of the Austrian part of the show in which the wines of Hungary are displayed. There the Hungarian Commissioner presented him and his suite with glasses of Tokay. "I drink," said the King, "to the health of his Majesty the Emperor of Austria, who has just been crowned King of Hungary!" And he drained his glass to the last drop. The Commissioner filled it up again. "What! another toast?" cried his Majesty. "Yes,

sire. We must, if you please, drink to the health of the King of Prussia!" "Well, here's to the health of the King of Prussia, who is a good old fellow." And the King poured the Tokay down his royal throat.

THE efforts of some of the gentlemen at a late fashionable dinner at Paris to make themselves understood by the waiters, are described as painful. A naval officer was overheard to say to a waiter, "Monsieur, donnez-moi a fork, all vous plait." And another inquired, "Avez-vous some vegetables?"

The following bull was perpetrated by a young Irish gentleman who was exceeding anxious to meet a certain young Irish lady at the house of a common friend, who had expressed her entire readiness (as most young ladies would, under similar temptations) to perform the amiable part of "daisy-picker" to the young couple: "But," said the poor fellow, anxiously, "there is nothing in the world so embarrassing, you know, as to meet a girl by appointment. I am sure, under the circumstances, I wouldn't myself—neither would she. Suppose, my dear madam, you could manage it so as to let us meet at your house some evening without either of us being aware that the other was present."

CRACQUE'D.—Mamma (severely): "Why are you not playing with the others, Blanche?" Blanche (innocently): "Don't know how, mamma. Major Mallet is teaching me." —*Punch.*

WHAT ARE THE JAMAICA COMMITTEE ABOUT?—The following horrifying notice may be seen in a respectable shop window hardly more than a stone's throw from one of our largest metropolitan churches: "Blacks dyed twice a week!!!" —*Punch.*

MRS. PRADDOY.—At the Oxford Commemoration of Founders and Benefactors, with an appropriateness perhaps unique, Mr. Praddey received an honorary degree. In his special case the distinguishing initials, D.C.L., are always to be interpreted as signifying Donor, City of London. —*Punch.*

A (K)NAIF REMARK.

Cook: "Oh, and if you please, m', will you order some new kitchen knives? Peas is a-comin' in, you see, m', and the old ones has got so sharp behind that they cut the servants' mouths." —*Fun.*

WHY do the upper ten crowd so to the Prince of Wales? Because they're afraid of losing caste. —*Fun.*

STREET NONSENSE FROM SHIFFIELD.—What set of blades were the Roman Emperors, Augustus and Tiberius? The blades that formed a pair of Casars, of course. —*Fun.*

ON THE SPOT.—Mr. Roberts, the champion billiard player, is so proficient in the spot-stroke that he can enter the den of leopards in the Zoological Gardens and caress the animals with perfect impunity. —*Fun.*

DROP IT, I SAY!—We understand that an eminent medical practitioner has discovered an unfailing specific for the gout. In compliment to the Earl of Derby, he calls his discovery "Rupert's Drops." —*Fun.*

MUSICAL EXECUTION.—Some singers must be looking forward anxiously to the days when capital punishment will be abolished. At present they run daily risk of being hanged, for they seldom appear in public without murdering a song. —*Fun.*

BY OUR MOKE.—It is to be hoped that visitors to the Paris Exhibition will, during their stay in France, learn the art of making a good cup of coffee; as what is at present offered to the British public under the name of that beverage is nothing but a perfect Mocha-ry! —*Fun.*

"GRATIE LE RUSS."—There is a saying attributed to the First Napoleon which declares that if you "scratch a Russian you will find a Tartar." The Pole who attempted the life of the Czar may congratulate himself on having missed his aim so completely. Had the Czar received a scratch his would-be assassin might have caught a Tartar, instead of one who was generous enough to intercede for him with the French Emperor. —*Fun.*

AN ELECTRICAL AUTOMATON.—There is one giant toy in the centre of one of the avenues of the Exhibition. It is a large piece of imitation rock-work, about twelve feet high, covered with rich vegetation, ferns and mosses, lilies and orchids; a spring gushes forth from one side and feeds the pond in which it is placed, and in which gold and silver fish glitter and gambol. Peeping out of one of the cavernous openings at the bottom is a huge black and white Newfoundland dog of nature's size and nature's mould, but not of nature's life and blood. The attendant touches a secret spring, and while the admiring observer stays and stares and feels inclined to pat Pompey's head, Pompey rolls his eyes, opens his mouth, and makes a very good imitation of

the deep-mouthed welcome of some watch-dog's honest bark. Startled, but not intimidated, the observer raises his eyes and discovers carelessly sitting on a huge boulder a hare, which immediately plays a wild tattoo on a drum placed before it, and ere pensive, a hideous and enormous baboon on one side clatters his jaws, rolls his eyes, scratches his head, and plays a wild and savage air upon a fiddle, while on the other side of the rock some pastoral swain decked in gorgeous ribbons,

Reclines sub tegmine fagi.

bows his head, carefully peeps all around, raises a pipe, and brings forth strains that would melt Coryllis, who sits not far off, had she only life, and who probably, with other figures scattered about the rock, will continue to attract crowds of excited and amused observers of this strange medley of electric agency and skill, during the continuance of the Exhibition.

AN ANCIENT ROSE TREE.

WHILE very old oaks, yews, and chestnuts have each found their "vates" to embalm their memories in the pages of history, there is an humble member of the vegetable kingdom which has not, so far as I know, found a place in English botanical records. I allude to an exceedingly ancient rose-tree at Hildesheim, in Hanover, which is still flourishing, as a friend of mine, who has lately seen it, tells me, with all the vigour of youth.

This remarkable tree, or rather climber, for it is supported against the wall of a church, was in existence when Christianity itself was little more than 1,000 years old; and, if we may believe tradition, had even then been blooming for well-nigh 300 summers. But I will give its history in the words of the well-known botanist, Herr Leunis, himself a resident at Hildesheim:

"The oldest known rose-tree in the world is one at present growing against the wall of the cathedral of this town (Hildesheim), remarkable alike for its extreme age and for the scanty nourishment with which it has supported itself for so many centuries. It varies but slightly from the common dog-rose (*R. canina*), the leaves are rather more ovate, the pedicels and lower leaf-surfaces more hairy, the fruit smaller and more globular. The stem is two inches thick at its junction with the root, and the whole plant covers some 24 square feet of the wall. Bishop Hesilo, who flourished 1054-1079, took special interest in this rose as being 'a remarkable monument of the past,' and when the cathedral was rebuilt, after being burnt down in 1061, he had it once more trained against the portion of wall which had been spared by the fire. Tradition states that, in the year of grace 814, the Emperor Ludwig the Pious, son of Charlemagne, was staying with his Court at Elze. Being desirous of hunting in the huge forest where now stands Hildesheim, mass was said by the imperial chaplain at the place of rendezvous. By some mishap, when the service was concluded and the party dispersed, the vessel containing the sacred elements was left behind. On returning to the spot the following day great was the surprise of the chaplain to find the holy vessel overshadowed by the tender branchlets of a lovely rose which had sprung up in the night, and now filled the air with the perfume of its flowers. The Emperor shortly after arrived, and by his command a chapel was built with the altar standing on the spot occupied by the roots of the rose—that very rose, which is now blooming as freshly as though a single decade, and not a thousand years, had passed over its head."

So far tradition. Certain it is that the roots of the existing rose-tree are buried under the altar of the cathedral, and consequently are inside the building, the stem being carried through the wall to the outer air by a perforation made expressly for it. My informant tells me that the plant is held in the highest veneration by the inhabitants, and that no one is permitted to gather the flowers or break the branches.

W. W. S.

SANTA ANNA.—Santa Anna, now an old man of seventy years, has been spending the winter on Staten Island. He is said to be worth a little less than a million, and to have given up all connection with Mexican politics.

THE CZAR.—Extraordinary stories are current of the Czar's conduct in Paris. One class of these anecdotes is designed—we would not be far wrong in saying invented—to illustrate the simple nature of the life he led in the gay capital. For instance, the Czar was curious to know how his uncle of Prussia would be received. He took his son's arm, and walked down to the terminus, and stood among the crowd, listening to its remarks on the Emperor as he drove up to receive his royal guest in all the pomp of state ceremonial, and waited till the cortege

had driven off before he wended his way on foot towards the Elysée. More than that, the Czar was at the great Marché des Halles, at four in the morning, to see the supplies come in for the consumption of the city, and hear the bargainings and chafferings of the excited crowd as to the price of fish, vegetables, &c., and almost every night he walked along the Boulevards, enjoying the peculiar characteristics of Paris—namely, that it is awake at night.

THE PERFECT DAY.

When morning, rising from her eastern couch,
Rolls back the amber curtains of the day,
And, softly flushing, lifts her dewy lids,
Beneath the fiery sun's impassioned ray;
As stealing tipsy o'er the drowsy hills,
She wakes the sleeping flowers by wood and glade,
A tender pain thrills softly through my heart
That all this beauty must so quickly fade.
And when o'er quiet vale and breathless sea
The fervid noon uplifts his gleaming shield,
I softly sigh that he again so soon
The royal sceptre of his power must yield.
And when pale night, with finger on her lip,
Hushes the last faint sound of noisy strife,
And softly spreads her benison of rest,
O'er all the care and weariness of life,
I sit and think of the fair dawn that comes
To careworn souls, fearless and fresh for aye;
And all the tender calm, and peace, and rest
Of the long noontide of eternal day.
Smiling, I cross my palms upon my breast,
And pain and sadness fade like mist away:
Beyond these shadowed morns and changeable noons
Dawns the sweet splendour of a Perfect Day.

K. B. E.

GEMS.

If you get along in this world, you must not stop to kick at every cur who barks at you.

Do what is just, speak what is true, be what you appear, and appear what you are.

Fix your purpose aright, and banish all circumstances to its uses, as the wind bends the reeds and rushes beneath it.

Men of the noblest dispositions think themselves happiest when others share with them in their happiness.

Three things important if you wish to keep friends—to give much, to ask little, and to take nothing.

Despair nothing because it seems weak. The fly and the locust have done more hurt than ever the bears and lions did.

Rejoice not at the good of a stranger, neither rejoice then in the evil that befalleth thine enemy: wisest thou that others should do thus by thee?

Those who have resources within themselves, who can date to live alone, want friends the least, but, at the same time, best know how to prize them the most.

PLEASURES OF BENEVOLENCE.—There is more pleasure in seeing others happy than in seeking to be happy ourselves. There is more pleasure in acquiring knowledge to be useful, than in merely seeking knowledge for our own happiness. If young and old persons would spend half the money in making others happy which they spend in dress and useless luxury, how much more real pleasure it would give them.

A MAGNIFICENT painting by Vandyke, representing St. Cecilia, has been brought to light in restoring the old church of Cachelvoch, between Heals and Bersel, in Belgium.

THE CHINA CUP.—The China Cup, 4 ft. 6 in. in height, to be shot for at Wimbledon, has arrived. The China Cup is of silver. It is named after the land where the generous boys have subscribed for it. It must be won two years in succession by a corps ere it can be claimed.

THE PARIS EXHIBITION.—The Paris Exhibition turns out well in a pecuniary sense. On an average 100,000 francs, or 4,000*l.*, are taken at the turnstiles of the Exhibition daily. This is more than was taken, counting one week with another, at the gates of the Hyde Park building in 1851. It is said that a grand banquet will be offered to Napoleon III. by the exhibitors of the Universal Exhibition.

UNDER THE ROSE.—The first rose ever seen was said to have been given by the god of Love to Harpocrates, the god of Silence, to engage him not to divulge the amours of his mother Venus; and hence the ancients made it a symbol of silence, and it became a custom to place a rose above their heads in

their banqueting-rooms, in order to banish restraint, as nothing there said would be repeated elsewhere; and from this practice originated the saying "Under the Rose," when anything was to be kept secret.

THE HENRIETTA.—The yacht *Henrietta*, the winner of the ocean race, arrived at New York on the 8th of June, having made the voyage in 32 days and 11 hours. The *Henrietta* encountered heavy weather during nearly the whole passage.

THE CRYSTAL PALACE.—The Crystal Palace directors have arranged, for the present, to make good the portion of the building only which extends from the screen to the north transept, terminating the north end of the palace at the latter point, beyond the Alhambra and Byzantine Courts. The contractors undertake, under a penalty, to complete it at such a date as will insure this portion being ready for those plants which need protection during the winter.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

A WHITE paste, adhesive to all surfaces, is said to be made as follows:—A solution of 24 ounces gum arabic in two quarts warm water is thickened to a paste with wheat flour; to this is added a solution of alum and sugar of lead, 720 grains each in water; the mixture is heated and stirred about to boil and is then cooled. It may be thinned, if necessary, with the gum solution.

TREATMENT OF CIDER.—Fix the cask up on arrival in the place you intend it to remain, which should be a cool cellar; make a vent-hole through the bung, and let off the air, allowing the peg to remain a little loose for a couple of days, then stop the cask up quite tight. After standing for a week or ten days begin to use it from the cask, taking the greatest possible care to keep the cask perfectly airtight, while the cider is in draught, and it will keep good through the season. Before bottling cider the best way is to use part of it in draught for a fortnight, which will get the cider into good condition to bottle; the bottles should be clean and dry. Then draw off the cider into the bottles; fill them half up the neck, so that the corks do not touch the cider by half an inch; let them be corked well by a person who understands corking; afterwards keep the bottles standing up in a cool place. By strictly attending to these directions cider will keep good in bottles for ten years.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE Earl of Belmore is to be the new Governor of New South Wales.

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE CHRISTIAN has been appointed ranger of Windsor Great Park.

THE REFORM BILL.—Out of twenty-six divisions on the Reform Bill the Government have gained twenty and being beaten only on six.

It is the intention of her Majesty next year to hold drawing-rooms, and also to give some breakfasts in the gardens of Buckingham Palace.

DURING the Cambridge academical year four doctors of divinity, two doctors of laws, one doctor of medicine, 228 masters of arts, and eight masters of laws have been made.

A RIVAL to CHANG.—A French giant from the Vosges, measuring 84 feet in height, has been to Paris, for the purpose of measuring himself against the Chinese giant exhibiting there. The Chinaman was beaten.

THE Crown Prince and the Crown Princess of Prussia, with the Royal children, will shortly repair to Misdrey, in the Isle of Wollme, in the Baltic. The illustrious couple intend spending the autumn at the chateau of Erdmannsdorf, in Silesia.

THE RESEARCHES at POMPEII.—A bronze money chest has lately been discovered in the excavations at Pompeii. The figures, which are carved in bas-relief on the sides and lid, are said to be of extraordinary beauty.

NEW LYING-IN HOSPITAL.—Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild, whose young wife died in childbirth a few months ago, has determined to found a lying-in hospital to her memory. A site has been purchased on the east side of Southwark Bridge Road. It is the baron's intention to spend 10,000*l.* on the building.

SWISS SHOOTING MATCH.—The Swiss Federal rifle-shooting match is about to commence at Schwyts, near the spot where William Tell shot Gessler. The different prizes offered represent a value of 300,000*fr.*, not including premiums, which may be estimated at an equal sum. The funds of the Swiss Federal Carbineers' Society furnish the money for the prizes, together with voluntary donations from various countries.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

CHARLES WILLIAMS—"The Orphan Boy" is declined with thanks.

J. C. T.—Thomas Haynes Bayly, the lyric poet, was born in 1797, and died in 1859.

J. P.—Molders is a Portuguese gold coin, its value is 25s. 11½d.

SHELDON—Armorial bearings are found, or granted by Heraldic College, London; the expense varies according to the trouble given.

AN INQUIRY.—Do not apply to any of the advertising persons you mention, for without doubt they are quacks and impostors.

MUSICAL.—J. C. Wolfgang T. Mozart, a musical composer, whose life was written by Edward Holmes, was born 1756, and died 1791.

A PIPERAT BOY.—Without some more distinct clue than you have given it would be impossible to discover your sister in so vast a place as the "United States of America."

CONSTANT READER.—The name *Moniagus* can only be pronounced exactly as it is spelled, taking each syllable separately, viz., *Mon-i-a-gus*, or as if the last syllable were spelled *us*.

C. C. M.—If you are sure your "Rembrandt" is an original, and not a copy, you will find no difficulty in disposing of it. Any picture dealer would be glad to be possessed of it, and would willingly give you its value.

CONDELLA.—One of the best substances for cleaning knives and forks is charcoal, reduced to a fine powder, and used in the same manner as brickdust. This is a recent and valuable discovery.

INQUIRY.—A good cure for convulsive hiccup is to take one drop of chemical oil of cinnamon on a small lump of sugar, which must be kept in the mouth till dissolved, and then gently swallowed.

BRISTOL, B. C.—I. You can only obtain your discharge by application to the Commissioners in Bankruptcy before whom your case was heard. 2. The Statute of Limitation is six years.

FANNY.—To stop cramp during sleep stretch the heel out as far as possible, bending the toes slightly upwards; persons subject to this should sleep on a mattress declined as the foot, and exercise caution in eating and drinking, at cramp generally arises from a weak or imperfect digestion.

ETTY.—The word *psalm* signifies "a song of praise." It is derived from another word which means to touch, or to beat; because the singing of psalms was originally accompanied with musical instruments, which were played upon by being touched with the fingers like a guitar, or beaten like a drum.

ETTY.—Early rising is absolutely injurious if it unites us for vigorous work during the day; it is impossible to lay down a uniform law as to the quantity either of food or sleep which each individual requires; what is excess to one would be too little for another.

FORTEUQUE.—The narcotic power of the extract from the poppy called opium was known to the Greeks about 300 B.C., and it was used as an opiate by them and the Romans; its medicinal properties, however, were not fully understood till about the middle of the seventeenth century.

A NATURALIST.—The casowary is found in Java, and other eastern lands; it is a large bird resembling the ostrich in form and general habits. Fruit and eggs are its food. It is very fleet, and difficult to capture, and when caught fights most bravely.

JUDITH.—A good remedy for bronchitis is to take some honey from the comb and dilute it with water; wet the lips and mouth occasionally with it. It has never been known to fail in cases where children had swollen throats so as to be unable to swallow; it is a simple remedy, and efficacious.

GETTER.—Let your chief aim in life be to "Live for something." Do all the good you can; by this means you will leave behind you a monument of virtue that can never be destroyed; perform acts of kindness and charity towards all with whom you come in contact, and your memory will always be held sacred. Good deeds will shine for ever as the stars of heaven.

AGATHA.—Oils and pomatums instead of improving the hair or increasing its lustre have the contrary effect; they make the skin of the head dirty, and prevent it from curling; the best thing is to wash the roots and partings of the hair with pure water and then brush it well. The hair should never be twisted, knotted, or pulled contrary to its natural direction.

S. W.—1. Nothing but constant practice and perseverance will enable you to improve your writing. Copy the best models, and endeavour to acquire a correct and distinct formation of each separate letter. 2. A great accumulation of

dandruff or scurf is most effectually removed by having the head thoroughly shampooed, repeating the operation at intervals until the skin of the head is perfectly clean; use no oils or pomatums. 3. It is a bad plan to have a tooth taken out; go to a good dentist, who most likely will advise you to have it stopped; to keep the teeth white a dentifrice free from any acid should be used, and the mouth rinsed with tepid water. 4. There is no very great difficulty in learning to play the guitar, if you have only patience enough to persevere in acquiring the first rudiments, for which purpose procure an instruction book for the guitar; great taste is requisite to play it well. 5. The best way to improve the personal appearance by getting stouter is by good and regular living, temperance, and moderate exercise in the open air.

R. B. R.—You must apply to the War Office, giving the Christian, surname, and rank of the soldier; also as near as possible the date of his death, and you will receive in all probability from the officials the necessary information; you had also better state whether related or not. In the India Office medals and funds belonging to deceased soldiers are still retained for any claimants who may apply.

CLAUDE.—The reason why, in a clear atmosphere, the sky is blue is thus accounted for: The light of the sun falls upon the earth without change; it is then reflected back by the earth, and as it passes through the atmosphere portions of it are returned, and this double reflection produces a polarized condition of light, which imparts to the vision the sensation of a delicate blue. Polarized light is that which has been subjected to a compound refraction.

MARK.—July was originally called Quintiles, it being the fifth month of the Roman calendar; Marc Anthony named it Julius, in honour of "Caius Julius Caesar," dictator of Rome, who was born in that month, and reformed the calendar. The Anglo-Saxons called it *Medmonath*, the meadows then being in bloom. Also *Hey-monath*, because they gathered in their hay-harvest at that time, and *Aefter-litha-monath*, or latter warm month.

THE BACHELOR.

(By a Compromised Bachelor.)

Not a laugh was heard, nor a joyous note,

As our friend to the bridal we hurried;

Not a wit discharged his farewell shot,

As the bachelor went to be married.

We married him quietly to save his fright,

Our heads from the sad sight turning;

And we sighed as we stood by the lamp's dim light,

To think he was not more discerning.

Few and short were the words that we said,

Though of wine and cake partaking;

We escorted him home from the scene of dread,

While his knees were awfully shaking.

Slowly and sadly we marched him down,

From the first to the lowmest story;

And we never have heard or seen the poor man

Whom we left alone in his glory.

A. B., forty-seven, and a widow, with two children. Respondent must have a little money; a widower not objected to.

MICHAEL L. M., twenty-three, a widow, fair, pretty, and poor. Respondent must be tall, dark, and not under forty.

LIZZIE M., twenty-one, medium height, fair, dark brown hair, gray eyes, and a dressmaker. Respondent must be steady, with an income of 1200: per annum.

ADA MARY, nineteen, medium height, a brunette, and good looking. Respondent must be steady, and with not less than 1200: per annum.

FRANCIS, forty, 5 ft. 2 in. in height, fair, a widow without income, and has an income of 400: Respondent must be about the same age, and have an independence.

LILLIE W., young, tall, brown hair, blue eyes, and will have 500: on her wedding-day. Respondent must be tall, dark, handsome, and have a good income.

LEAH MORTIMER, twenty-two, 5 ft. 4 in. in height, black hair and eyes, fair, can play and sing, has an income of 400: a year, and 7,000: when married.

IDA and EVA. "Ida," seventeen, fair, and pretty. "Eva," sixteen, medium height, dark, and good looking. Respondents must be tall, dark, good looking, and have a moderate income.

VIOLET and ROSEBUD. "Violet," twenty-one, tall, dark hair and eyes, good looking, accomplished, and domesticated. "Rosebud," nineteen, tall, slender, brown hair and eyes, and rather musical. Respondent must be tall, good looking, and fond of home.

ROSE and ANITA. "Rose," eighteen, tall, fair, dark hair and eyes, and will have 1,000: on her wedding-day. "Anita," nineteen, tall, fair, light hair, blue eyes, and will have 1,000: when married. Respondents must be tall, dark, and about twenty.

H. THIMMER.—The manuscript entitled "Dream or Reality" was declined as unsuitable to our columns. You will find by referring to the end of the last page of the journal that we do not undertake to return rejected manuscripts, therefore correspondents should keep a copy.

FLORENCE and EDITH. "Florence," eighteen, 5 ft. 5 in. in height, fair, blue eyes, dark brown hair, and handsome. "Edith," seventeen, 5 ft. 2½ in. in height, fair, large blue eyes, golden hair, and respectively connected. Respondents must be tall, dark, and with a little money; sailors preferred.

F. H. W. (Leicester-shire), twenty, 5 ft. 4 in. in height, light complexion, blue eyes, good looking, very lively, and will have an income of 1500: to 2000: a year when of age. Respondent must be about the same age, good looking, and moderately educated; not particular as to what creed.

MABLE and ANN. "Mable," twenty-one, tall, good figure, brown hair, and hazel eyes. Respondent must be tall, dark, handsome, and five or six and twenty. "Ann," eighteen, petite, brown hair, blue eyes, and a good figure. Respondent must be a gentleman, kind, affectionate, and about nineteen or twenty-three; a midshipman preferred.

J. H. E.—1. To make sarsaparilla for purifying the skin, take 1 lb. of sarsaparilla root, 1 gallon of water; simmer gently for two hours, adding a little water occasionally to make up for evaporation, then add 1 oz. (alcohol) of sassafras root, 1 oz. (rasped) of guaiacum root, 1 oz. (bruised) of liquorice root, 1 oz. (bruised) of mezerion root; boil for a quarter of an hour and strain. Dose, 3 to 6 oz., three times a day.

2. A good hair-curling liquid may be made by taking 1 oz. of borax, 1 drachm of powdered gum senegal, 1 quart of hot water (not boiling); stir, and as soon as the ingredients are dissolved add 1 oz. of spirits of wine, strongly impregnated with camphor. On referring to rest, wet the locks with the above liquid, and roll them on twists of paper as usual, leave them till morning, when they may be untwisted and formed into ringlets.

A YOUNG WIDOW.—1. In your case there must be a will, then all depends upon the provisions of that document. Your best course would be to apply at once to a respectable solicitor. 2. The time a woman should remain unmarried after the death of her first husband depends very much upon taste. Socially she would not be thought any the better if she were to marry at least within twelve months.

WALTER.—The names "Francis" or "Frank" and "Frances" or "Fanny," are derived from an old German word meaning "free." A German tribe who invaded and conquered France called themselves Franks or freemen, and from them the country which had been before called Gaul took the name of France. The old English word *Franklin* meant a freeman who possessed property, and this has since descended to us as a surname.

LEAH.—The choice of suitable vegetation for an aquarium, is not difficult, the *Acacaria alismatrace* may be found in almost every stream in the country; it grows rapidly and is one of the best plants for keeping the water in a healthy condition. The *Valisneria spiralis* is, however, a much prettier plant, but does not afford so much oxygen to its growth. The introduction of both is at first indispensable; they grow without roots, and all that is necessary is to tie a stone to the end of each piece, for the purpose of keeping it in its place, and to hide the fastening by sinking it beneath the shingle.

PRISCILLA.—Keep a good conscience, for if wickedness had no other punishment than the stings of conscience which always result from evil actions, that would be reason enough to make you avoid what would cause you so much pain; no misery of the human mind is so great as remorse of conscience, and it is liable to be renewed as often as the guilty action is brought to memory. It is true the conscience, by repeated resistance to its warnings, may become "soured as with a hot iron;" but this apparent death is no more than a sleep; at some unexpected moment conscience may be aroused and exert a salutary power never before experienced.

N. W. (Nottinghamshire), nineteen, light complexion, good looking, with curly hair, blue eyes, and has nothing to offer but a loving heart. Respondent must be fair, and domesticated; a Protestant preferred.

G. V. D., twenty-one, well educated, good looking, about to enter the theatrical profession, and one of the best actors in London. Respondent must possess means, be educated, and talented.

MOSS ROSE, twenty-one, tall, fair, light whiskers, very steady, a tradesman, and entitled to a small fortune. Respondent must be domesticated, good looking, and about 5 ft.

C. H. C., twenty-nine, 5 ft. 9 in., fair, good looking, a musician, and has 1000: in the bank. Respondent must be a Christian, with a small income; no objection to a widow with one child.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

HARRY JACK is responded to by—"Nelly," nineteen, dark, pretty, and with 300: per annum; and—"Lizzie," nineteen, medium height, dark hair and eyes, and good looking.

CHAMPAGNE CHARLES is—"Amy," eighteen, 5 ft. 3 in. in height, fair, pretty, and with a yearly income; and—"Edith," light complexion, rosy cheeks, and considered good looking.

A WIDOWER (a mechanic) by—"M. Vlsey," thirty, dark hair and eyes, good looking, and a widow, with two children—"S. F.," thirty-four, medium height, brown hair and eyes, and domesticated—"Jane Ellen," twenty-seven, and accustomed to housekeeping—"E. R.," thirty, a widow, with one child, and thinks she could make house happy and comfortable—"Frances," 5 ft. 4 in., dark eyes, in business, and a widow, with three children; and—"Primrose," twenty-eight, tall, fair, and good tempered.

ELVIRA B. by—"D. E. G. G.," twenty, 5 ft. 8 in. in height, fair, and dark-brown hair. (Handwriting would require considerable care and practice to be fit for a merchant's office).

ROSE by—"Richard Sargent," twenty-six, 5 ft. 4 in., black hair and whiskers, and blue eyes.

ELIZA and ROSE by—"Hinton" and "John." "Hinton," twenty-two, 5 ft. 9 in. in height, fair, not bad looking, a mechanic, and a Protestant. "John," twenty-two, 5 ft. 6 in., fair, and a mechanic.

MARION ST. CLAIR by—"W. D.," twenty-eight, 5 ft. 10 in., an abstainer, musical, and with an income of 2500: a year, and about 500: derived from freehold—"Ch. V.," twenty-five, 5 ft. 11 in., and will start in business soon—"Arthur L.," twenty-three, 5 ft. 10 in., dark hair and eyes, good looking, well educated, musical, cheerful, strictly honourable principles, a professional man, and will have a fair income; if "Marion" has no money he could not marry within three or four years—"Albert Edwin," twenty-two, 5 ft. 8 in., and has a good position in a mercantile firm—"B. R.," 5 ft. 9 in., and a mechanic—"G. C.," 5 ft. 10 in. in height, dark hair, nice looking, steady, fond of music and home, and has a fortune; and—"Alfred," twenty-two, 5 ft. 10 in., fair, loves home and country, and is in a commercial house.

PART LI., FOR AUGUST, IS NOW READY. PRICE 6d.

6d. Now Ready, VOL. VIII. OF THE LONDON READER. Price 4s. 6d.

Also, the TITLE and INDEX to VOL. VIII. Price ONE PENNY. Nos. 2 and 9 OF THE LONDON READER HAVE BEEN REPRINTED.

N.B.—CORRESPONDENTS MUST ADDRESS THEIR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OF "THE LONDON READER," 334, Strand, W.C.

†† We cannot undertake to return Rejected Manuscripts. As they are sent to us voluntarily, authors should retain copies.

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